

AL GHAZĀLĪ'S PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

With special reference to Al Ihya', Book 1.

A T H E S I S

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K. EL S. M. EL BAGIR

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INTRODUCTION.

(1)

The story of Al Ghazali's life is not directly relevant to the theme of the present work. Indeed it has already been the subject of exhaustive study. The history of his spiritual development however, is relevant, since some knowledge of this is necessary for the understanding of his thoughts on education. The scholars who have written on his theology, his mysticism or his life story have not been given the chance to differ on the subject of his spiritual development, since Al Ghazali did not leave them to guess but wrote his spiritual history in his book Al-Munqidh, in which he gives a clear picture of the intellectual stages through which he passed. This account shows how his philosophy of education has grown out of an earnest and unremitting search for the truth, and how the truth he eventually found came to shape his thought on every subject.

(2)

Al Ghazali tells us that in his earliest youth he ceased to accept the religious belief which came from authority. That his masters so taught him was no longer a sufficient reason for belief. When he was still under twenty he began to

(1) Al Ghazali was born in A.D. 1053 at Tus and died in 1111.

(2) Al-Munqidh pp. 65 - 67.

examine theological questions and disputes, and the effect upon him was very similar to that which such disputes had upon Gibbon. So he drifted on, probably restrained only by the influence of his great teacher, the Imam Al Haramayn, a man of the most profoundly religious character. But at the camp of Nizam Al Mulk the strain became too great and for two months he touched the nadir of absolute scepticism. He doubted even the evidence of the senses; the eye could not perceive the movement of a shadow, but nevertheless the shadow moved; a gold piece would cover any star, but nevertheless the star was larger than the earth.⁽¹⁾ His senses had deceived him, why not his mind? May there not be something behind the mind, transcending it, which would show the falsity of its convictions even as the mind showed the falsity of the information given by the senses? May not the dreams of the Sufis be true and their revelations in ecstasy the only real guide? When we awake in death, may it not be into real existence?⁽²⁾ He was troubled for two months by such speculations. He saw clearly that no reasoning could help him, for he had no ideas on which he could depend as a starting point. But the mercy of God is great. Al Ghazali went on to say "He sends his light to whom He wills," a⁽³⁾

(1) Al-Munqidh p. 71.

(2) Al-Munqidh p. 72.

(3) Al-Munqidh p. 75.

light that is produced by no reasoning but flows into the soul." By this light Al Ghazali was saved; he regained the power to think, and the task which now lay before him was to use this power to guide him to truth. He decided to examine all the current schools of thought in the effort to discover where truth lay. There were the scholastic theologians, those who were engaged in discussing religious truth on logical or philosophical grounds. There were the Ta'limīyah who held that to reach a truth one must have an infallible living teacher and that such a teacher existed. There were the followers of philosophy, discussing all problems by logic and rational argument. There were the Sufis who held that they were the chosen of God, and could reach knowledge of Him directly in ecstasy. With all these schools he had been earlier acquainted to a greater or less degree, but now he settled down to examine them one by one and find which would lead him to a certainty by which he could hold. He felt that he could not go back to the unconscious faith of his childhood. He began with scholastic theology, but there he found no help. If the premises^s of the theologians are granted, they can draw conclusions. Their science had been founded by Al Ash'arī to defend the truth against Mu'tazilites; it had succeeded in that, but had no further value, for it could hold the faith against the heretics, and expose their

(1)
inconsistencies; but against the sceptics it could do nothing.
It is true that the theologians had attempted to go further
back and meet the adherents of philosophy on their own ground,
to deal with substances and attributes and first principles
generally, but these attempts were ineffective. The
theologians lacked the necessary knowledge of the subject, had
no scientific training and were constrained eventually to fall
back on authority. After the study of them and their methods
it became clear to Al Ghazali that the remedy for his ailment
was not to be found in ^hscholastic theology. (2)

(3)
Then he turned to philosophy. He had seen already that
the weakness of the theologians lay in their not having made
a sufficient study of the laws of thought. He gave three
years to this study. He devoted two years to the study of the
writings of the different schools of philosophers and the
third to reflecting upon and working over his results. He felt
that he was the first Muslim thinker to do this with proper
thoroughness. He divided the followers of philosophy in his
time into three groups: Materialists, Deists and Theists. The
first group altogether reject ^{ed} the notion of a creator; the
world exists from all eternity, the animal comes from the egg

(1) Al-Munqidh p. 79.

(2) MacDonald (Duncan Black), The Life of Al Ghazali, p. 83.

(3) Al-Munqidh p. 83.

and the egg from the animal. The second group admitted a creator, but the creator was a machine which has a certain balance ('itidāl) in itself which kept it running, its thought was a part of its nature and ended with death. They thus rejected a future life, though admitting God and His attributes. He regards Aristotle as the principal exponent of this doctrine and the Greek schools. His doctrines were best represented for Arabic readers in the books of Avicenna and Al Farabi - the works of their predecessors on this subject were a mass of confusion. Parts of these doctrines had to be stamped as unbelief, part as heresy and part as theologically unimportant.

The branches of philosophy recognised in Al Ghazali's time were six: Mathematics, logic, physics, metaphysics, political economy and ethics. These he examined in details showing what elements in each are useful, which are innocuous, which must be excluded from education; and what dangers are incurred by those who rejected what is useful or study what is harmful. His disposition is to admit those truths of mathematics, logic and physics, which are logically irrefut^{fat}-able; but he gives warning against intellectuals and the belief that mathematicians, on the ground of their success in their own field, can be allowed to carry their methods into other fields; and against the belief that every subject must

be susceptible to the precision of syllogistic logic. In physics he accepted the constitution of the world as developed and expounded by the students of physics. But all should be regarded as entirely subject to God. The system of current ethics he considered to be entirely derived from the teaching of the Sufis; nothing in it was independent of their teaching.

(1)
Thus in philosophy he found little light. He turned then to the Ta'limīyah whose doctrine is based on the principle of authority in religion, ~~reliance~~ upon an infallible teacher through whom alone could truth be found, and ^{believe} that this teacher existed somewhere if he could only be discovered. For himself Al Ghazali found the Ta'limīyah and their teaching profoundly unsatisfactory. They had learnt a lesson which they repeated parrot fashion, and their shallowness of thought was clear to all. He wrote several attacks on this school.

He was left with the school of Sufism, and this he went on to explore. He tells us in the Munqidh ⁽²⁾ how often he had seen the emptiness of the Ta'limīyah, he began to study the books of the Sufis. He read the works of their chief writers, like Al Muhāsibi, Al Jurayd, Al Shibli and

(1) Al-Munqidh p. 107

(2) Ibid p. 121

Abu Yazid Al Bistami and also sought oral teaching. Soon it became plain to him that the understanding of Sufism could not be reached by reading, but must come through ecstasy and religious experiences. To achieve this he thought it necessary to be initiated as a Sufi himself, live their life and practice their practices. This he did for two years. During this period he went through many hardships, and finally found the light he had been seeking. He learnt that the Sufis were on the true and only path to the knowledge of God, that neither intelligence, wisdom nor science could change or improve their ethical doctrine. The light in which they walked was essentially the same as the light of prophecy. There was no other light to illuminate any man in this world,⁽¹⁾ and in this light Al Ghazali found the truth.

After his return from his travel^s, and his mystical discovery Al Ghazali, as MacDonald tells us, 'came back to his home but did not resume his public duties as a teacher.' Later that was forced upon him. "The century was drawing to a close, everywhere there was evident a slackening of fervour and faith. A mere external compliance with the rules of Islam was observed. The students of philosophy went their way, false Sufism abounded, the lives of many theologians

(1) Al-Munqidh p.153.

excited scandal. The Ta'limiyah were still spreading. A religious leader was needed,⁽¹⁾ and Al Ghazali was the man.

This, then is the truth which Al Ghazali eventually adopted, and which came to shape the general pattern of his thought. This truth has come to form his theory of man, the nature of mind, the nature of knowledge, and the human character. It so permeates his thought and is reflected clearly in his views about the child right from birth, his early nurture, his food, clothing and every aspect of his life.

This truth, moreover, dominates his thinking even in those fields of thought which are essentially scientific or purely religious. His views on the matter of the physical world, and his views on the world to come are dominated by his profound conviction of the Sufi truth in which he had eventually found rest and certainty.

Thus Al Ghazali's theory of education in its main pre-suppositions is the product of inter-mingled elements, some of them from diverse traditions of human thought, some of them original contributions made by Al Ghazali in his attempt to reconcile what seems to him true in these different traditions. In particular ~~the~~ attempts to reconcile religion

(1) D.B. Macdonald, Development of Muslim Theology, p.228.

in its true original form as given in the Quran, Sufism, as he understands it, and philosophy, mainly that derived from Greek origins, in so far as he finds it complementary to the concepts of religious and Sufi ideas. His thought is strongly intellectual but it can often be understood if we realize that its direction is governed by a deeper mystical current, and this is sometimes so powerful as to overⁿwhelm the straight course of intellectual argument. Then Al Ghazali's thought appears restless and inconsistent. Sometimes it is as if he were carried on along the philosophical traditions of Greek thought, with scientific method as the dominant force. Suddenly, and this happens frequently, the course of this current turns and the whole scene is transformed. To alter the metaphor, the man's appearance changes: The Sufi fever is spreading and he goes into a traⁿce. He says things that can hardly have any intellectual grounds. He himself feels this but he is unable to escape from the difficulty. Sometimes he attempts to provide a logical justification for such ideas but quite often fails. Where faced with this intractability of reason, that same reason which he constantly eulogises, he takes refuge in appeal to the 'hidden knowledge', the knowledge which is not amenable to logical justification, but is communicated only to those who possess it. Thus the inconsistencies of thought that are found in Al Ghazali's

philosophy are attributable on the one hand to his unshakable respect for human reason and on the other to his deep fidelity to the form of truth in which he had found certainty, the Sufi way.

Some commentators on Al Ghazali's work are apt too readily to accept as the final verdict Al Ghazali's own account that after he had examined the different schools of thought, he came to the discovery of the light, and resting in this discovery abandoned that which he had found in the philosophical schools. They are apt to neglect to examine how far Al Ghazali did in truth confine himself to the contemplation of this light. It is true that the dawning of the 'Light' was the critical point in his turning to Sufi truth, in banishing the malady of scepticism which for some time held him in darkness. But I am inclined to think we are in error if we too unquestionably accept the account that Al Ghazali completely surrendered to this light. In reading his books Ihya'ulūm al dīn (The Revival of religious sciences), which is generally accepted as the most authentic of the works of religious and Sufi ethics attributed to him, I could not avoid the feeling that Al Ghazali was still tied with the bonds of intellectual reasoning from which he himself thought he had been so far liberated that he was free in the contemplation of the light. He often seems to struggle to

loosen these bonds, but was ^{never} ~~not~~ altogether free of them. In the following expositions and discussions of his doctrines of human nature, his theories of learning, a great part of his theory of moral education, we cannot help being struck by the way they are pervaded with scientific method and philosophical ideas, both those which he received from his Greek masters, and those which appear to be his own findings. This gives support to my view that he could not altogether liberate himself from the logical mode of thinking. This tendency towards intellectualism, even after he found the light, encourages me to accept with reserve the traditional statement that Al Ghazali, after he had found light in the Sufi truth, turned his back upon the philosophical modes of thought, and escaped altogether from scepticism. Indeed his scepticism had certainly abated its stormy character, but I think there is great naivety in believing that it had completely disappeared. This mild scepticism, as it seems to me, found expression to a greater or less degree in what appear to be serious inconsistencies even in his authentic writings. But Al Ghazali, nevertheless, stands firm in his Sufi convictions. There is almost always a mystical or Sufi conclusion to many discussions, on whatever topic, in his book Ihyā'. He often tries to justify his Sufi conclusions by quotation from the Quran and the Traditions, but these

justifications are frequently unconvincing.

Now when Al Ghazali spoke of his sceptical development, he made no reference to religious belief. Did he doubt the religious truths, as he doubted the information of senses and the inferences of reason? Did he doubt the oneness of God, the belief in the world to come, Heaven and Hell? Al Ghazali says nothing. May be he did, but he did not venture to admit it in the face of a strictly Muslim community where his rivals and enemies could exploit the admission even to the extent of creating a danger to his life. This in my opinion has a special significance in relation to his theory of education. It explains why his scheme of fundamental religious education did not essentially differ from the views currently accepted by all Muslims. If it was impossible for him to suggest in his writings that his scepticism had extended to religious belief, it was impossible for the same reason to suggest any modification of the current practice in religious education. Hence we find Al Ghazali's account of religious education in no way original. It is both in full concord with the accepted views, and free from the kind of inconsistencies that we may find elsewhere in Al Ghazali's thought.

At the same time his emphasis on good actions and the purification of the heart brings him into close accord with

other religions that exalt those same ideas, and made^k him in particular more sympathetic than others. Sufi influence is clearly the source of this element, but this must not lead to any impression that Al Ghazali ever deviated from the most strict muslim orthodoxy in what he writes of religion.

What means of access Al Ghazali had to Greek thought is a question bound up with^a wider and more fundamental problem, one which is still partly a matter of conjecture, the question of the channels through which these ideas reached the Arabic World. Al Ghazali certainly had no knowledge of Greek nor is there any evidence for thinking that he was a student of languages. There are writings of his which show that he had sufficient knowledge of Persian to express himself in that language but this knowledge did not lead to any sign of great influence upon his work.

Neither is there any evidence to show that he read translations of the actual writings of Plato, Aristotle or Plotinus. Nevertheless the ideas of these philosophers are deeply embedded even in his religious writings. There is no serious problem as to how Al Ghazali became familiar with these ideas. He most probably read the works of Al Farabi in which Platonic influence is most marked, he certainly read the works of Avicenna whose writings offered the clearest reflection of^{the} Aristotelian and Neoplatonic schools of

thought. When Al Ghazali tells us that he devoted three years to the study of philosophy his text-books must have been almost entirely confined to the works of those distinguished Muslim philosophers, whose ideas he combated. The crucial problem, to which there is as yet no certain answer, is that of the access which Arabic thinkers had to Greek thought. A full exploration of this problem lies beyond the scope of the present work, but a brief outline is necessary to explain the context of Al Ghazali's thought and writing. In giving such an outline we can profit by the recent illuminating work of Dr. Walzer.⁽¹⁾

Dr. Walzer maintains that we are not in a position to give a definite account of the genesis of Islamic philosophy. There are too many gaps in our knowledge of the history of the descent to them of earlier philosophical traditions. Many works which might illuminate this history have remained neglected and the work of rediscovering them must be gradual. He is able, however, to give a broad picture of the points as they are so far known.

(1) Richard Walzer Islamic Philosophy (Chapter XXXII), The History of Philosophy-Eastern and Western, Vol.II, Also see chapter I, The Syriac Version of Hellenism, Arabic Thought and its place in history, by De Lacy O'leary.

When in the seventh century the Arabs conquered Egypt and Syria, Greek philosophy had been familiar in these countries for more than a thousand years as a continuing tradition of studies, handed down in schools that were well established throughout the Greek-speaking world. The great creative period of Greek philosophy, however, was long since past, and its light had become dim by the time it came to be handed on to the Arabs. It is important, however, to realise what Greek philosophy was like in the fifth and sixth centuries A.D. It was in the form in which Greek ideas had been incorporated into Christian thought that the Arabic thinkers made acquaintance with these ideas. Dr. Walzer points out that it is not always easy to be sure how Plato and Aristotle were expounded in the Greek Schools, since on some topics our only evidence is the account given in Arabic sources of the teaching of the later exponents of these schools.

Moreover, Greek thought, in being reflected through the minds of Christian thinkers, had been transformed by the influence of Judaic religious thought. Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, was the first to try to express the essence of Judaism in terms of contemporary Greek philosophy, this was Greek philosophy before the influence of Neoplatonism. His thought had a major influence upon two Christian theologians through whom his combination of Greek philosophy with Judaic thought

came to affect Christian philosophy. These first Christian philosophers were Clement of Alexandria and Origen, and the first Christian philosophy was thus uninfluenced by Neoplatonism. This influence came upon Christianity late, from the fourth century onwards. The Greek philosophy which influenced the first Christian philosophers was non-religious. Neoplatonism however, was not non-religious but pagan. Therefore the impact of Neoplatonism gave urgency for Christian philosophers to the problem of reconciling the theories of Greek philosophy with the tradition of Hebraic religious thought, that is, to the conflict between religion and philosophy, between the natural and the supernatural modes of thought.

The conflict is epitomized by John Philoponus and it is this conflict which pervades the historical background of Arabic philosophy, which raised, as Dr. Walzer says: "The principal problem of faith and reason."⁽¹⁾

These currents of thought reached the Arabic world direct from the late Greek Schools through translation into Arabic from Greek and through Syriac. Of the Greek thinkers it was Aristotle, with the works themselves and the

(1) Islamic Philosophy (Chapter XXXII p.123). The History of Philosophy Eastern and Western, Vol. II

commentaries of scholars, who was best known to the Arabic thinkers. The ^{al works} logic in particular ^{were} ~~was~~ much used by the Muslim theological schools. His treatises and the commentaries upon them gradually became known, with the exception of the Politics. The absence of any influence of the argument of the Politics is noticeable in Al Ghazali's writing, particularly his writing on Moral Education, and this absence is in marked contrast to the strong influence of Aristotle's Ethics.

Plato's Timaeus, Republic and Laws were available and were studied. The two latter became text-books of political theory in the school of Al Farabi. His "Ideal City" is an approximation to the city of the Republic, and from this Al Ghazali, I believe, drew much of those of his ideas that have a Platonic colour. This Platonic element is indeed strong in Al Ghazali as will be seen.

The Arabic translations of Greek philosophy began in early Abbasid times, about 800 A.D. and can be followed until about 1000 A.D. The translators ^{with} were, ~~few~~ exceptions, Christians, some of them followers of the orthodox church, the majority Nestorians or Jacobites. They usually translated from a Syriac version, less frequently from the Greek original. Thus Christian translators play a part in the general development of thought in the first two centuries

of the Abbasid empire.

All the Arabic philosophers were influenced by a written philosophic tradition neither exclusively Platonic, nor exclusively Aristotelian, but a mingling of the two.⁽¹⁾ We shall find an example of this double influence in Al Ghazali.

The only source that has been drawn upon in the present study of Al Ghazali's educational ideas has been his book Ihyā' ulūm al-Dīn⁽²⁾ 'The Revival of Religious Sciences'. This restriction is imposed for two reasons: first, the commonly accepted view of the authenticity of the book; and, secondly, its comprehensiveness, for it embraces the whole province of his educational thought. It will not be necessary, however, for the purpose of the present study, to examine all the detailed arguments and educational recommendations which Al Ghazali includes in this important book. Moreover, I have had to ignore a number of the philosophical issues raised in it, which seem to me deserving of close investigation, but which have not so direct a bearing on the philosophy of education as to justify attention to them in the present context. I have consulted also other works of Al Ghazali, listed in the bibliography, which have direct or indirect

(1) Ibid. p. 123 - 126.

(2) Referred to, throughout the present work as Ihyā'.

significance for his philosophy of education, but have not drawn upon these as sources for his ideas for the reasons given above. The exception to this is the support here invoked from his book Al-Munqidh for the history of his spiritual development. This was necessary for the reason that it is his only autobiographical work and is certainly authentic.

In presenting Al Ghazali's argument I have found considerable rearrangement necessary in order to present his thought in systematic form. This should not be taken to imply that his thought does not form a coherent system; but merely that his concern to emphasise an idea often leads to needless repetition. This is strikingly noticeable whenever he approaches his Sufi doctrines, which he introduces throughout his work. There are many ideas, too, which Al Ghazali introduces casually as subordinate to a major topic, which seem to me to deserve separate treatment, and in such cases I have not hesitated to present such an idea as a separate topic. Examples are the theory of innate ideas, the theory of reminiscence, the stages of ^{the} child development, theories of the learning processes, the nature of child, and other major topics which Al Ghazali discussed incidentally. Thus I hope to make my account of Al Ghazali's theory more easily comprehensible by arranging it in a systematic form

that may facilitate further study.

Al Ghazali's style is in my judgment highly effective in impressing his thought ^{upon} his reader by expressing an idea in more than one form. This often proves helpful in elucidating his thought. Sometimes it fails, but one cannot be sure whether the failure is due to the wealth of ideas crowding his mind or to a real shortcoming in the argument. Examples of such a failure are to be found in his attempt to prove that 'aql' as 'intelligence', is peculiar to man, (Part I p. 27) his discussion of the order of existences in relation to the theory of forms (Part II p. 76). There are numerous other such examples. The expression seems to be unclear because the thought is not fully worked out; the obscurity is not merely a matter of use of language.

All the translations and summaries of Al Ghazali's work which I have given are made direct from the original. The only exception is that the quotations in the introduction are from MacDonald's account of Al-Munqidh. His interpretation of Al Ghazali's meaning, however, differs slightly from my own in some cases, and in such cases I have modified his account to accord with my own interpretation ...

There is some difficulty in deciding upon the appropriate English words to represent Arabic terms, particularly in those cases when Al Ghazali is creating a new

terminology. In all such cases I have endeavoured to make as clear as possible the sense in which the term is used. An outstanding example is to be found in the meanings of 'aql and nafs.

In the matter of philosophical terminology, Al Ghazali was certainly an innovator in simplifying the language of his predecessors such as Avicenna, whose style was highly abstract, and in bringing philosophical language nearer to the level of normal cultivated expression. This indeed was one ground for the attacks launched against him by one of his successors, Ibn Rushd. His writing is, however, not free from technicality, but this consists in something other than the previous philosophical terminology; partly it consists in the adoption of existing Sufi terms, partly in the appropriation of certain terms for his original concepts; hence the creation of a new terminology.

Al Ghazali's innovation in terminology is but a slight reflection of his wider originality as a thinker. I shall be speaking in the Conclusion of Al Ghazali's outstanding position in the history of thought; here it is sufficient to say that he stands quite alone in his philosophy. The underlying principle in his whole philosophy is his unwearying attempt to reconcile his Sufi experiences with the philosophical ideas which he accepted, and to reconcile both with the

tenets of orthodox religion. No other thinker had attempted such a reconciliation, and Al Ghazali had no fellow-seekers in the attempt. In the following pages I shall show from an examination of Al Ghazali's theories how far he was successful in this reconciliation. The attempt has earned him an outstanding position in Arabic thought as an original and daring thinker.

.

PART I

DOCTRINE OF HUMAN NATURE.

Like most educationalists Al Ghazali puts the Doctrine of Human Nature in the forefront of his theory. Man is the object to be educated, therefore in order to know how he acquires knowledge or gains experience, we must understand what he is and how his natural forces and passions can be regulated. Human nature is the question at issue, so let us see how Al Ghazali examines it.

First comes Mind, (aql), the noblest of human elements. Mind, says Al Ghazali, is the tree whose fruit is knowledge. As his theory proceeds, in highly figurative language, the influence of Plato is clearly discernible. In investigating the casual relations of the "Things in the mind", he varies Plato's similes, using in fact the same figures with different analogies. Closer scrutiny suggests, however, that these discrepancies may be more apparent than real.

Extracting from the Sixth Book of the Republic only what has direct bearing on the present inquiry we find that Plato, using physical analogies to symbolize intellectual^{things}, presents the soul as the eye, "The organ of sense, which is the most like the sun." But the eye, in order that it may have sight, needs the addition of "A third nature", Light, whose source is the sun. Hence the sun is the author of sight. That

which according to Plato corresponds to the sun as the giver of light to the soul, making it radiant with intelligence , is the "Idea of Good".

To Al Ghazali, on the other hand, the sun symbolizes (1) Mind, and the light that streams from the mind is knowledge. Thus the sun is equated by Al Ghazali with Mind, by Plato with the Idea of Good - an apparently wide divergence. It is, however, to be noted that Plato's "Idea of Good" does not occur as such in the writings of Al Ghazali. To both philosophers, however, the sun symbolizes the "author" and "cause" of science, truth or knowledge. If we assume that Al Ghazali is postulating mind in its highest state, his conception becomes identifiable with Plato's "Idea of Good". Then the correspondence is close both in the pattern of thought and the symbolism of the sun. This I believe to be the correct interpretation of Al Ghazali's conception of mind as reason, despite inconsistencies of thought, to be examined in due course.

Al Ghazali further asserts that the mind is the means of happiness both here and hereafter. Since knowledge is commonly recognized as excellent, it follows that mind, being the cause of knowledge, must be the noblest of all.

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p.73.18.

"How could that be doubted", he observes, "seeing that, though the beasts are on a lower level than men in respect of their ⁽¹⁾tamyiz they yet have reverence for men?" This reverence is expressed in the psychological state of the beasts when they recognise man, the fear and apprehension shown by the strongest animal at the sight of what appears like the human form is a remarkable sign of this reverence. It is obvious that this reverence is because of the mental power he possesses.

The Defining of Keywords

At the outset of his enquiry Al Ghazali finds that error has arisen through faulty interpretation of scientific terminology. Accordingly he prefaces his account of human nature with a set of definitions of "Keywords". ⁽²⁾ Thus guided by a penetrating insight into meanings, his study of these keywords is thorough^{ly} analytic. This is shown in the

(1) Tamyiz is an ambiguous word in Al Ghazali's terminology. It is variously used in different contexts; here it apparently means the quality of distinguishing man from animals. He also uses it to denote "sensus communis" (see p.175). At other times he speaks of "the age of Tamyiz", i.e. when reason becomes fully developed (see p.182). I have given each time what I believe to be the meaning Al Ghazali has in mind; but it is unfortunate that he did not include Tamyiz in his defining of "keywords".

(2) Ihyā' Vol. III p.3.

way he concerns himself with the relation of knowledge and experience, and in his distinguishing between 'Aql as an inborn power (Gharīzah) and 'Aql as the items of knowledge actually attained (' Ulum). Here Al Ghazali finds in the pedagogy of his own day a problem still persistent in ours.

'A Q L

Al Ghazali's approach to the study of mind or intelligence is by way of a fourfold definition of the Arabic word 'Aql which had been a ^mstumblingblock and cause of dispute among scholars. ⁽¹⁾ Certainly both in importance and complexity it holds a first place among the words singled out by Al Ghazali for definition. His fourfold division of the connotation of 'Aql is not exhaustive, nor does he entirely escape the ambiguities he is concerned to combat.

The extreme difficulty of equating some of Al Ghazali's findings to the accepted English equivalent of the word in question makes it frequently advisable to retain the Arabic word in the following inquiry:

First Meaning: 'Intelligence'

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p.75.13.

This suggests that 'Aql is the distinctive quality of human beings. "It is a quality (Wasf) by which man is distinguished from all other animals". Through it man is capable of comprehending or building up "speculative sciences" (Al 'Ulūm Al Nazariyyah) and becoming conscious of the mental operations within himself (Tadbīr As sinā'at Al Khafīyyah Al Fikrīyyah) Al Ghazali supports Al Muhasibi in his definition of 'Aql as an inborn power (Gharīzah). The definition reads, "It is a Gharīzah through which the (1) perception of speculative science is possible." "It is like a light which is shed into the heart, and by which it is prepared to perceive things". Al Ghazali expresses his support of this definition, which implies that 'Aql is a Gharīzah or a quality inborn in man which enables him to achieve self-knowledge and knowledge of others. He comments "He is not right who denies this and confines the meanings of 'Aql to actual knowledge, for men when negligent or sleeping are considered to possess 'Aql because of the presence of this Gharīzah in them, although they lack the (2) actual knowledge."

Thus through 'Aql man is fitted for speculative

(1) Ihyā' Vol.I p.75.19.

(2) - Ibid.

sciences or abstract thought.

Al Ghazali is at pains to expand his theory that 'Aql in this sense is a Gharizah - an inborn power. He comments... "It maybe objected that man and the donkey are equal in possessing sensual perceptions and the Gharizah which is the inborn power, and further that there is no difference between them except that God, according to His usual custom, created in man the actual knowledge, that is to say, the fruit of this power, which He did not create in the donkey. If this argument is sound, then it would also be possible to maintain that the donkey and the inanimate object are equal in possessing life, on the ground that there is no difference between them except that God according to His usual custom created in the donkey actual life which He did not create in the inanimate object." This would be absurd, however, Al Ghazali says: "Supposing that the donkey were dead or inanimate, then we must say that in the same way God is capable of creating in it, being thus dead, movements observed in it alive. This is absurd; therefore we must say that the difference between the donkey and the inanimate thing is an internal principle which is peculiar to it, namely life." Similarly the difference between man and other animals with regard to reasoning is the inborn power (1) (Gharizah) which is called 'Aql.

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p.75.26.

(1)
Second Meaning: 'Emergence of Innate Ideas'.

Here Al Ghazali is influenced by Plato's theory that some ideas are innate, though not fully developed at birth. They emerge at the time of adolescence, and consist, says Al Ghazali quoting one of the theologians, in the awareness of the possibility of the possibles and the impossibility of the impossibles, such as the judgment that two is more than one, and that a person cannot be in two places at the same time. Al Ghazali comments ... "This definition is sound in itself. For such ideas ('Ulum) exist and calling them 'Aql is reasonable, but the error lies in the denial of the Gharizah and the claim that 'Aql is nothing but that knowledge. "

Thus Al Ghazali's only objection to this "theologian's definition" of 'Aql to connote "Innate Ideas" is the implied absence of the inborn power or Gharizah. (2)

Third Meaning: 'Experience' ('Ulum at-Tajārib)

Another meaning of 'Aql, is the power which is gained through the interrelation of man with his environment. The education instilled by practical experience is the main source of 'Aql in this sense.

(1) 'Ulūm darūriyyah 'necessary knowledge' is the phrase Al Ghazali uses for "innate ideas".

(2) Inya' Vol.I p.76.4.

Al Ghazali in explaining this says: "It is the power gained through experiences and changing circumstances since he who is taught by experience and versed in traditions is usually described as 'Aqil 'Experienced' and he who lacks these experiences is known as Jahil 'Inexperienced'.⁽¹⁾

The Fourth Meaning: 'Wisdom'⁽²⁾

This meaning has in Al Ghazali's thought a spiritual bearing. It is the power which results from the control over desire. It corresponds to some extent to the philosophic form of the soul in Plato's terminology. It is the higher element in the constitution of human nature. It is, as Al Ghazali puts it, that power (Qūwah) which leads to foresight of consequences and to the control of the appetites which seek momentary pleasure. When this power is developed, then its possessor is called 'Aqil 'Wise' in the sense that his conduct is shaped by a reasoned regard for consequences and not by passing desires⁽³⁾.

Having completed his fourfold analysis of 'Aql Al Ghazali makes a careful comparison of his findings and endeavours to synthesize them. "The first two", he says, "i.e. the inborn power of intelligence and the innate ideas,

(1) Ihyā' Vol.I p.76.5.

(3) Ihyā' Vol.I p.76

(2) The context here suggests that he means by 'aql 'wisdom' though he does not use the equivalent Arabic word hikmah.

are inherited properties, the other two, wisdom and experience, are acquired." That is, they must be achieved through "nurture". In an interesting passage he anticipates objections to the assigning of so long a span to a single word, from the concept of innate knowledge, (Ulm Daruriyah) to that of "experience", (Tajrib) and ventures into linguistic theory for his answer: - "It is probable", he says, "that the term agl originally denoted the inborn power of intelligence, but, by a process of development, came to denote the fruits of that power." "A thing", he (1) comments, "is sometimes defined by its fruit." He explains how the innate ideas in his second definition make their appearance at the time of tamyiz, (2) and why they are inborn. We shall discuss this point fully when we speak of his theories of learning.

Q A L B and R U H

These two terms, translatable respectively as "Heart" and "Spirit", have each at least two meanings for Al Ghazali, since each symbolizes a physical as well as a non-physical entity.

Al Ghazali dismisses in few words the physical entities

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p.76.25.

(2) The time when reason becomes fully developed.

as "matter for the physician". The physical heart, whose form, composition and position in the body are briefly described, is, he observes, visible to man and beast alike and present even in the dead. It is, however, the fountain-head and source of ruh (see below), and forms the link between the spiritual qalb and all other parts of the body. He guardedly compares this relationship to that of "Accidents to substances, qualities to what they qualify, the thing placed to its position". Then he warns against trying to explain the mystery since (a) it belongs to the realm of "contemplative knowledge, and ^his concern is with practical knowledge, (b) the investigation demands the disclosure of the secret of the spirit, of which the prophet himself did not speak. (1)

Physical ruh, a subtle substance springing from the cavities of qalb, embodies the life force and is carried in the veins to all parts of the body, imparting life, and the senses of feeling, sight, hearing etc., just as a lighted lamp, carried through the house brings light wherever it goes. (2)

On the transcendental plane qalb and ruh are

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.3.20.

(2) Ihya' Vol.III p.3.24.

synonymous, symbolizing the essence of man, human nature, man in reality.⁽¹⁾ Thus he uses them in contrast to the body, all of whose members and organs are the servants of qalb. They are its "outward faculties"; both inward and outward faculties he terms junud al qalb (the heart's forces). It is evident that this whole conception of qalb with its inward servants, corresponds to Plato's "soul", viz. the forces of appetite, anger and reason, contrasted with the "body".

Qalb further symbolizes the knowing and comprehending element in man, that which is addressed, punished, censured, and held responsible⁽²⁾ - in fact the rational element.

Al Ghazali, probably discerning the wide discrepancy in meaning between pneuma, together with its accepted Arabic equivalent ruh, and thumos, the spiritual element, generally translated the latter by ghadab - anger. He generally prefers qalb to ruh in contexts where either term would be suitable in Arabic.

N A F S

Second only to agl in complexity is the nafs. Its

(1) Ibid.

(2) Ibid.

Quranic equivalent is "self", but in the use made of it by Al Ghazali, under the influence of Greek thought, the translation should frequently be "soul".

Like qalb and rūh, but in different contexts, nafs symbolizes the essence of man. Al Ghazali detaches his conception of it from Sufi usage, according to which it signifies, not the apprehending element, but the baser tendencies in man, which "command to evil"⁽¹⁾ and which, according to Sufi ethics, must therefore be combated and broken. Thus the Prophet ... "Thy greatest enemy is nafs, which is between thy ribs."⁽²⁾ To Al Ghazali, on the other hand, nafs stands primarily for the soul in its higher state, which again has two manifestations, the "upbraiding" nafs (lawwamah) and the tranquil nafs (Al Mutma'innah).⁽³⁾ "O, thou Tranquil Nafs return unto thy Lord well pleased and accepted", he argues, "The nafs as a combination of blameworthy qualities, cannot be pictured as returning to God ... for it belongs to the party of Satan." The difference between the "upbraiding" and the "tranquil" nafs is one of degree; the former is still struggling with

(1) Qur'an, 12.53

(2) Ihya' Vol.III pp. 3 - 4.

(3) Qur'an, 75.2; 89.27.

the lustful "nafs" and upbraiding its possessor for his shortcomings in worshipping his Lord, and has therefore not achieved complete tranquillity. If it ceases to oppose, and obeys the enticements of lust and the invitations of Satan,⁽¹⁾ it is called the nafs commanding to evil".

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(1) Inya' Vol.III p.43.

THE ELEMENTS OF THE SOUL

Al Ghazali's theory of education is a product of two main formative factors. (1) The influence of Plato, which shapes the general pattern of his thought, and determines his scale of human values; (2) his own intellectual independence, especially his clear judgment of the relation of words to the things they symbolize. It is this second factor that enables him to steer clear of the errors common to most followers of his two masters, Plato and Aristotle, and sets him far above and in advance of his contemporaries.

The play and interplay of these two factors is discernible in his analysis of the elements of qalb which he equates with Plato's "Soul".

Appetite

Both Al Ghazali's fourfold and Plato's threefold division of human nature begins, at the lower end, with Appetite. Both distinguish two main kinds of appetite, the necessary, which is the means of preserving the body, and which it does us good to satisfy, and the unnecessary, which includes of urges, all superfluous and in varying degrees harmful.

According to Al Ghazali the maintenance of the body in health and vigour, for which the appetite is the natural agent, has a lofty purpose. Man's business here on earth is the journey of his soul towards God. It is the purpose of education to equip the soul for the journey, and, in this process of equipping, the body plays the role of the riding animal. Hence good maintenance for the body is important, and provision for the journey is necessary. ⁽¹⁾

The Lower (or unnecessary) appetites . . . Various factors render the presentation of the lower appetites, whether according to Plato or Al Ghazali, a more complex matter. Plato recognizes a subdivision of lower appetites into: a) - those that are unnecessary, wasteful and unproductive, but can yet be regulated, and b) - those that are inherently wild and lawless, affect the best of men when reason is in abeyance, and, unless held severely in check, bring life to ruin. This whole conception is symbolized by Plato's Beast, the Hydraheaded monster with a natural capacity for growth and reproduction, some of whose offspring can be tamed and rendered serviceable, while others are radically untamable, inhuman and generally destructive. ⁽²⁾

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.5.9.

(2) The Theory of Education in Plato's Republic.pp.10-11.

To Al Ghazali the corresponding appetites are the lowest of human elements. "Man" he says, "for the reason that he is influenced by appetites, shares the cravings of beasts, such as gluttony, covetousness, lust, etc."⁽¹⁾ Al Ghazali also uses allegorical figures, picturing man as a being having the outward form of man but combining within his skin four creatures, the pig, the dog, the demon, and the philosopher (Hakim).

In Al Ghazali's allegorical figures the pig is appetite and corresponds to Plato's beast. To explain why the pig represents appetite he says "The pig is not held in contempt because of its colour, nor because of its form, but because of its gluttony and greed."⁽²⁾ Al Ghazali maintains that "Most people are subject to concupiscence, and indulge desire for food and sex; for instance, we may see how such men condemn others for worshipping deities and stones, but, if the truth were clear to them, they would find themselves worshipping a pig and obeying its commands. From among many evil qualities resulting from submission to this pig (Appetite) he cites prodigality, shamelessness, servility,⁽³⁾ envy, and spite.

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.9

(2) Ibid.

(3) Ibid p.9 - 10.

(GHADAB) - "Anger"

With the element of "Appetite" we are on firm terminological ground in both Al Ghazali and Plato. The second element introduces a problem of meaning which Al Ghazali himself has not left entirely clear. The term used by Plato for his second element in human nature is thumos translatable in English by "spirit", but in a different sense from that in which 'spirit' is equivalent to pneuma or rūh. Therefore the word chosen by Al Ghazali to designate his second component element in human nature is ghadab - 'anger'. It covers virtually the same ground as Plato's 'spirit', but there are certain ambiguities. Like appetite, ghadab has its good and bad sides. Of the former he writes: "Since God has created the animal perishable and liable to ruin through internal and external causes, He has provided it with that which protects it from corruption and defends it against destruction." He refers again to the body's need for food and proceeds: "As to the external means of destruction to which man is subject, these are the sword, the spear and all other death-dealing instruments. Thus it requires strength and passion which rise from within man to repel the destructive attacks. To this end God has created the force of anger out of fire and

fixed it in man's disposition, kneading it into the clay of his inborn nature (tīnah). Whenever he is prevented from fulfilling his aim, anger breaks out and expresses itself in the form of explosion to the extent that the blood of the heart boils with it, spreads in the veins and rises to the higher parts of the body, in the manner of fire or boiling water. This blood expands when a person is angry with someone who is inferior to him and on whom he can take revenge; but if the anger is directed against a superior where he has no hope of revenge, then the result is that the blood shrinks from the surface of the body down to the inside of the heart and the anger turns into grief, huzn. If anger is directed to an equal where the chance of revenge is doubtful, then the blood sways between expansion and shrinking. In general the place of this faculty is the heart. It brings about the boiling of the blood in seeking revenge. This impulse when provoked is directed to either the repelling of impending wrongs before they occur or the avenging of wrongs after they are inflicted, revenge is ^{its} ~~the~~ natural food and by ^{which} ~~it~~ ⁽¹⁾ its satisfaction is secured."

DEGREES OF ANGER: Al Ghazali makes a threefold division of 'anger' according to degree, distinguishing the individual

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III p.144/5.

by (I) "Deficiency of the power (tafrīt), (II) Excess (ifrāt) and the mean (i'tidal). Aristotle's doctrine is here discernible.

DEFICIENCY:

This is a blameworthy state. Those subject to it are described as having no sense of honour (hamīyah), for he who lacks anger entirely is indeed incomplete. Hardness and sense of honour are regarded as virtues in the Quran. In praising the companions of the Prophet God said: "They are hard on the unbelievers but merciful amongst themselves." Such hardness is the result of the power of indignation.

EXCESS:

The person who is influenced by excess of anger lacks insight, consideration, reason and control; he becomes its slave. This domination is due either to instinctive factors or acquired habits. For there is a person who is by nature easily provoked to the extent that his nature is like that of an angry man. This natural tendency is caused by the hot temperament of the heart. There is also the person who attains such a condition through mixing with others who pride themselves on their subservience to anger, and regard it as courage and manliness. For instance such people boast "we do not bear with injustice." Then the person who hears comes

to have the idea of the goodness of such anger firmly rooted
(1)
in him.

The MEAN:

A mean degree of anger, or praiseworthy anger, is that which hears the voice of reason and religion. It rises when the sense of honour (hamiyah) is touched, and it abates when self-control (hilm) is appropriate. Keeping within the bounds of the mean in anger is righteousness (istiqamah) which God enjoined upon His people. The Prophet also said:
(2)
"The best of things is the mean (al wasat)" Concluding the analysis of the degrees of anger Al Ghazali says that if a man's anger is inclined to tepidity to the extent that he feels in himself a slackness of zeal and a lowliness of the self that inclines him to submit to wrongs and unjust humility, he should amend himself so that his anger becomes strong; and if his anger is inclined to excess, he should also amend himself by reducing his excess of anger. One
(3)
should try to keep to the mean between the two extremes. These, then, are the three forms of Al Ghazali's anger. In

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.145.10.

(2) Ihya' Vol.III p.146.17.

(3) Ihya' Vol.III p.146

other passages he pictures anger as representing the wild dog in the composition of human nature. He apparently here refers to anger in its second form.

THE SPIRIT or SPIRITED ELEMENT (THUMOS) IN PLATO

As stated, Al Ghazali's Ghadab covers the same ground, in most respects, as Plato's Thumos, but there are differences in approach and in the working out of the idea due to differences in the spiritual backgrounds of the two writers. Plato's term is akin to English "Spirit" in such contexts as "A spirited reply", "The good news restored the spirit of the troops". At the same time it is represented as the source of pugnacity and aggressiveness with their possible development into ferocity and cruelty. It is the hard element in human nature which if rightly nurtured becomes bravery, but if excessively encouraged degenerates into blind brutality. When a man thinks that he is the sufferer of wrong, he boils with anger and is on the side of that which he believes to be justice. His noble spirit will not be quelled, until he either slays or is slain, or until he hears the voice of the shepherd, (that is, reason) bidding his dog bark no more. ⁽¹⁾

This well-trained, well-bred dog, obedient to the voice of the shepherd, is not to be confused with Al Ghazali's "wild dog". It occurs again in Plato's conception of the State, as

(1) The Republic Tr. Jowett p.133

"the auxiliary that hears the voice of the ruler"⁽¹⁾.

So far Al Ghazali follows Plato, "Anger", says the latter, "at times goes to war with desire". "Anger", says Al Ghazali, "is used by the rational part of the soul to break the intensity of the appetite."⁽²⁾ "We observe", says Plato, "that, when a man's desires violently prevail over his reason, he reviles himself and is angry at the violence within him, and that the struggle is like the struggle of the factions in a state; his spirit is on the side of his reason."⁽³⁾ Similarly Al Ghazali states: "He who lacks anger is not capable of disciplining himself, for self-discipline cannot be secured except where a man uses anger against desire, and is angry with himself when desire craves for low pleasures."⁽⁴⁾

To Al Ghazali, on the other hand, the natural affinities of anger are with appetite; the two are almost allied powers, which reason must subjugate and employ in order to bring harmony into the inner life of the individual. True, "God created anger out of fire... kneading it into the clay of man's inborn nature"; (see P.⁴⁰), but, once lodged there, it becomes,

(1) The Republic Tr. Jowett p.133.

(2) Ihya' Vol.III p.9.29.

(3) The Republic Tr. Jowett p.132

(4) Ihya' Vol.III p. 146.15.

with appetite, the instrument of Satan, unless subdued by reason; and reason, as already shown, can be disarmed by its roar. Thus courage, righteous indignation, and the manly virtues, which are natural attributes of Plato's spirit, must be won in battle for Al Ghazali's anger by the victories of reason.

Sufi influence colours all this part of Al Ghazali's psychological doctrine. Introducing the Demon, the third allegorical creature, which has no counterpart in Plato, he thus graphically describes the spiritual position: "The Demon does not cease exciting the appetite of the pig and the anger of the dog. He tempts each of them through the other, and glorifies in their eyes that to which they are disposed... It devolves upon the philosophic part, which represents Reason, to obstruct the machinations of the Demon and, through its own piercing insight and shining light, to reveal his perversion of the heart."⁽¹⁾

Al Ghazali's brief statement that Reason can use the pig (appetite) against the dog (anger)⁽²⁾, is obscure, and he makes no attempt to clarify it. The following explanations, none of which is satisfactory, may be offered.

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III p. 9.27.

(2) Ihyā' Vol.III p.9.29.

- 1) - If reason limits the functions of appetite to the minimum, it follows that Anger, whose natural food is revenge, can be more easily controlled by reason. This seems to make illicit play with the metaphor "food".
- 2) - Since it is the Demon's method to set the pig and the dog to emulate each other, the strategy of his opponent, Reason, should aim at making them subdue each other.

THE DEMONIC ELEMENT

The introduction of the demon adds a further difficulty. Al Ghazali, believing that an enquiry into its nature will serve no useful purpose, discusses it according to its function. But he seems in two minds whether this element is an internal force which develops within man or an external power which enters the human heart. His first exposition of how human nature is constituted suggests the first view. Here he suggests through his allegorical figures that man combines within his frame a mixture of four elements, so that there are contained in him four qualities. The demonic (shayṭāniyyah) then is shown as an evil power exercising its activities in the role of agitator. In explanation of this he says "since he (man) is distinguished from other animals by 'intelligence', tamyīz, but still shares with them anger and appetite, he contains within him a demonic quality whereby

he has become evil, and employs his intelligence in devising various types of evil and fulfilling his ends through cunning trickery and deceit, presenting evil in the form of good, and these are the characteristics of the demon.⁽¹⁾"

This is illustrated by his picture of the demon's setting the pig and the dog to pervert each other by mutual emulation. Obedience to the irrational part of the soul is in fact obedience to this demon, for it is he who entices the pig (appetite), provokes the dog (anger) and employs them for his service.⁽²⁾ This is, then, a conception of the demonic element as a natural faculty, though it exercises itself through the activity of the other three faculties.

Now let us see how he represents this evil spirit in other parts of Al Ihyā'.

Speaking of the conflict within the human heart, Al Ghazali holds the opinion that there are two types of opposing thoughts, evil suggestions (waswas), and good inspirations (ilhām). The cause of the former is the Demon or Satan and the cause of the latter the Angel. He believes that the function of the Angel is the spreading of good, the imparting of knowledge and the unveiling of truth, and the function of

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III p.9,19.

(2) Ihya' Vol.III p.9

Satan is the reverse. Hence bad suggestions are the opposite of good inspirations, Satan is the opposite of the Angel, and hence there arises a conflict between these two powers. "The heart by nature (fitrah)", he says, "is equally liable to the reception of the impacts of the Angel and that of Satan.

Neither of the two powers prevails against the other until a man either follows desires or opposes them. If man follows the dictates of anger and desire, then Satan influences him and the heart becomes a nest of the devil, for desires are the pasture and the hot-bed of the devil; but, if he resists desires and does not allow them to rule him, and imitates the qualities of the Angels, then his heart becomes the residence of the Angel.⁽¹⁾

"He also maintains that so long as no heart is free from desire, anger, covetousness, greediness and so forth, the devil must have a foothold in every heart. That is why the Prophet said, "There is no one of you but has a devil." And when they (The Companions) said to him, "And also you, O Messenger of God", he replied, "I, also! but God⁽²⁾ helps me against him."

What, then, is this power? Is it an outside power that invades the heart of man and occupies it, the result of

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p. 24

(2) Ihya' Vol.III p. 24

environmental development? Or is it present as an inborn power in the child at birth - the result, that is, of heredity? If the latter, then the conception is in accord with Al Ghazali's first introduction of the demonic element. But if it is the former (outside power), then the question arises, how could this be reconciled with his first introduction of the demonic element? In another passage of the Ihyā' he says the conflict between the forces of the angels and Satan continues endlessly outside the heart, until the heart is opened to one of them, and then the victor enters the heart and settles there. In this case the incursions of the other occur occasionally. Most hearts, he thinks, are liable to the entry of evil forces and consequently subject (1) to evil suggestions which incite to momentary pleasures. How are we to explain this inconsistency? He also says that just as appetites are embodied in the flesh and blood of man, so too Satan circulates in the flesh and blood and surrounds the heart, and this is why the Prophet said: "Satan circulates within man as the blood circulates in his veins. Therefore close its channels by hunger, because hunger breaks (2) the appetite which is the channel of Satan."

Here again Al Ghazali leaves his problem unresolved and

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III p. 24

(2) Ihyā' Vol.III p. 25, 6.

this seems to me the source of the inconsistency in his view of the demonic element; he has confused what we may call the 'influence' of Satan with Satan himself. He evidently speaks of Satan as 'circulating' within the human heart just as the blood circulates, and it is obvious that the Satan which is an outside power cannot enter the heart and be part of it. He certainly means here the "influence" of Satan, whose function is to dominate the heart through appetite and anger, this influence becoming so dominant that it becomes part of the heart. I am inclined to think therefore that he conceives this evil power as being the external force of evil, (i.e. Satan) which enters into the heart in the form of an influence. This view is supported by his words "Until the heart is open to one of them". We must therefore accept that this force is external, but that its influence becomes an internal force. This, in my view, resolves the apparent inconsistency in these passages; nevertheless there seems an irreconcilable contradiction between his introduction of this power as external force and his division of human nature into four elements including the demonic.

THE RATIONAL ELEMENT.

In Plato's 'Republic' this is called the philosophic element. It ranks highest in the constitution of the human soul. As it is variously handled in different parts of The



Republic it would be of service to review the account of it given by Nettleship in his work 'The Theory of Education in Plato's Republic'; we shall see later how much Al Ghazali diverges from or follows the line of Plato.

Nettleship says: "We find the philosophic element at first characterised in a way far removed from what the English word would lead us to expect.

It is introduced as a necessary philosophic complement to the element of spirit. Unmitigated or unbalanced the latter element would be a source of mere indiscriminate pugnacity, and would result in a destructive war of all against all.

Clearly, if human nature is to be adapted to the higher function of civic society, it must contain some counter-balancing factor, some quality of gentleness to soften ferocity. The germs of such an element Plato finds in some of the lower animals, the well-bred dog which had been chosen to typify the quality of spirit is found to exhibit along with the greatest fierceness towards strangers, the greatest gentleness to those whom he knows; and this suggests what is found to be the fact when we look at human nature that this combination of qualities, so opposite, is not only possible but natural. But why call this softening element philosophic?" Nettleship continues, "Plato helps himself with the analogy of the dog. The dog judges of

friends and enemies by the test of knowledge, those whom he knows he treats as friends, with him to know is in a word to be fond, and it is the feeling of knowing those whom he knows which excites his fondness. He may be said in a sense to be fond of knowing much as a person who likes the society of his inferior might be said to be fond of superiority.

"In so far then as the quality of gentleness attaches to the consciousness of knowledge and the pleasure which that consciousness excites, it may be said to arise from fondness of knowledge and this is almost equivalent to philosophy in its literal sense of love of knowledge or wisdom."⁽¹⁾

There is another form of the rational element of the soul which is described in The Republic, of which Nettleship says: "it is still indeed the gentle or tame part in contradiction to the wildness and hardness of the spirited part, and it is still intimately associated with knowledge but the gentleness of which it is now said to be the source is the result of culture instead of dog-like attachment, and the knowledge in which it takes delight is the sense of something understood rather than of something familiar."

Nettleship concludes "when again we meet with the higher form of the soul it is no longer under the name of

(1) The Theory of Education in Plato's Republic. p. 15.

philosophic. The intellectual character in it now predominates over the emotional, it is the calculative, deliberative reasoning element in the soul, that in virtue of which it guides and rules, that which when fully developed becomes not love of wisdom but wisdom ...

"Its relation to the spirited element is also changed from being a merely complementary factor to it, it has come to be its natural master from whom issue the dogmas and principles which in the well trained soul appetite carefully obeys and spirit fearlessly carries out."⁽¹⁾

It now remains to turn to Al Ghazali's account of the rational element of the heart. He also gives it different forms in his work, the Ihya'. It is introduced as the third faculty of the heart, and in its simple and primary form it suggests to Al Ghazali the knowledge of or the familiarity with what is good or harmful to the body. The means of this familiarity is the faculty of 'sense perception', the faculty whose function is to identify things, the tester (al mut'arrif) which distinguishes^s between good and bad in order to satisfy bodily needs.⁽²⁾

Now let us see how closely Al Ghazali follows Plato's

(1) ^{Op. cit.} ~~Ihya'~~ Vol. III p. 16

(2) Ihya' Vol. III p. 596.

train of thought in the notion of the simple form of his philosophic element.

He does not lead up to his conclusion through the same argument as Plato but he agrees with Plato's conclusion when he says that the function of the rational element is to provide the heart with the familiarity with, or as he puts it the knowledge of, that which satisfies the appetite "for that he who needs nourishment would not benefit from the desire for food unless he were familiar with the food required"; therefore in order to secure this familiarity he requires two kinds of faculties, the first being inward, and the second being outward as it has already been said. ⁽¹⁾ Sensation here has a function, making possible this fondness which grows through familiarity, which is like Plato's conception of the quality in animals that gives rise to gentleness, the testing of knowledge, and consequently the fondness grounded in familiarity which in its developed form becomes in man the philosophic element. Al Ghazali, however, does not say what plays the role of Plato's spirit in creating this kind of 'rationality'.

Al Ghazali's next presentation of the rational element may also correspond to Plato's, though the correspondence is not easily recognised. He says: "the heart has another

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III p.5

faculty namely the faculty of knowledge or wisdom". In another passage he speaks of the characteristics of rational element by virtue of which man becomes superior. He says "His superiority is due to knowledge and volition. The former is the knowledge of secular and religious affairs, and of logical truths. (1)" (See part II p.74) This conception of the intellect may fairly be equated with Plato's fully developed Philosophic element whose object is knowledge, whose gentleness is the result of culture rather than mere devotion and whose delight is in things understood rather than things familiar. We may safely maintain that the knowledge of secular and religious matters etc. in Al Ghazali's language is equivalent to the culture which Plato's conception contributes to the shaping of the rational element.

Al Ghazali's final conception of the rational form which is introduced by him in his allegorical figure is almost identical with that of Plato. It represents the God-like or the Divine quality (rabbāniyyah) in the composition of human nature, it is the highest form of the soul. He says: "Since man in himself is a Divine matter ... he claims for himself Lordship and he loves domination, elevation, leadership and freedom. He is fond of learning and acquaintance with all

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.78.

sciences and ideas, and he claims for himself a comprehension of the reality of all things. He is pleased if knowledge is attributed to him and annoyed if he is accused of ignorance." Al Ghazali goes on to say: "Comprehension of all realities and domination over all creatures are Divine qualities, but in human nature there is a desire for that consummation"⁽¹⁾.

Al Ghazali says: "The function of the philosophic element (hakim) is to keep off the cunning and the mischief of the Demon by unmasking all his misdirection through its sharp insight and shining light."

Influenced by Plato's conception of the State Al Ghazali explains the relationship between this philosophic element and the other parts of the heart. To him, its function is to rule and guide, the function of the other elements is like that of the other classes in the State, therefore in performing each their separate functions in the best way they are also in the best way working for the good of the whole. Any serious contradictions between these elements may lead the individual to ruin and probably destruction; harmony and friendly co-operation lead to justice and consequently happiness. The conception of the individual in such manner illustrates the deeper understanding and wider outlook of the rational element

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p. 920.

in human nature. The formation of human character and the regulation of human conduct cannot come but as the result of the domination of this rational element.

To illustrate the functions of the various elements in human nature Al Ghazali uses several metaphors of which we shall now give an account.

THE STATE METAPHOR

This, the most ambitious of Al Ghazali's metaphors for the better understanding of Qalb, is built on Plato's "Republic", and clearly shows how Plato influenced his views on the social structure and its divisions. But the "Republic" here serves merely as the vehicle for the conveying of Al Ghazali's theory of the position of the heart in relation to the body. With the immense body of doctrine concerning justice, statecraft, education, and all other components of the civic community, which - whatever its ultimate theme and purpose - are discussed and re-discussed on their own merits in the "Republic" Al Ghazali is not concerned. But Plato identifies his state with his individual (Book IV); Al Ghazali's psychology of the heart is Platonic in design; accordingly he takes the skeleton outline of Plato's state as an analogy of the human soul, supplementing the account, where necessary, with elements from Sufi thought.

So the heart in the body is the ruler in the state and the body is the state which the heart rules. The rational element is the Counselor^I, the wise minister, who advises the ruler; the organs and physical forces are labourers who produce commodities for the community. Anger represents the military and security forces, whose function is to defend the state against external and internal attacks and disturbances.

Then a Sufi element appears: "The slaves", a class not found in the "Republic". They are largely dominated by Appetite, and the directing force behind them is, I think, the demonic element. So the slave is cunning and treacherous; Al Ghazali warns the ruler to be aware of this class until it becomes "Ruled and not ruler", commanded, and not commander, so that justice may be established in the state; for the slave will appear in the guise of an adviser but behind this advice is "terrifying evil and fatal poison", he never ceases from his opposition.

So, too, human nature: if it seeks the assistance of reason, is disciplined by anger, and uses both anger and appetite to restrain each other's excesses - then its forces become balanced and its character good.⁽¹⁾

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p. 6.19.

The City Metaphor

In order to elaborate the relationship between these faculties, Al Ghazali gives another analogy. Here the body is a city, and reason, the rational element in man, is the King, while its powers of sensation, both visible and invisible, are soldiers and keepers; its members are the subjects, and those elements of the soul which command to evil, namely appetite and anger, are the enemy that wars against the kingdom and endeavours to destroy the subjects.

Thus the body is seen as a fortress and its rational soul is the commander who is stationed there. If it fights until it defeats the enemy its deeds will be praised, but if it neglects its subjects and loses the fortress its deeds will be
(1)
blameworthy.

The Horseman Metaphor

Another example is given by Al Ghazali to identify the function of the rational soul. Reason is a horseman, appetite is the horse, and anger is the hound. If the rider is skilled, if his horse is well trained and his dog well bred, then he is likely to be successful; but if the rider is unskilled, his horse ungovernable, and his dog is intractable, then he is likely to meet disaster rather than to achieve what he seeks.

(1) Ihya Vol.III p.624.

The inefficiency of the rider corresponds to the lack of wisdom in man, the ungovernableness of the horse is like the excess of appetite, especially appetite for food and sex, and the wildness of the dog represents the passion of
(1)
anger.

(1) Ihyâ' Vol.III pp. 6³¹ - 7.

P A R T I I

CONCERNING HUMAN LEARNING

Innate Ideas

Like Plato, Al Ghazali considers how we attain ~~new~~ knowledge; Is it a gift of God? Is it something that can be developed through education?; Is the capacity for knowledge innate, or does it come of instruction, or both? Al Ghazali asserts that knowledge is of different types. Some, he finds, is innate (see Part I page³⁰ second meaning of 'agl). Here this argument follows Plato's in a famous passage of the Meno, which it may therefore be helpful to recall: "A man who does not know has within him true opinions about that which he does not know. The opinions are called up within him as a dream but on questioning him variously and repeatedly about the same thing he would at last come to know about them as correctly as anyone. Without being 'taught' but merely by being 'questioned' he will come to know, that is to recall certain knowledge out of himself."

In order to reach this conclusion Socrates has, during the discussion, called up a slave boy who knows nothing whatever of geometry, and put a series of questions to him with a figure of squares and triangles drawn in the sand. The boy, after some overconfident blundering, followed by a state of perplexity which reveals to him his present ignorance, eventually discovers the correct answers to the questions,

"uttering", says Socrates, "nothing but his own opinions".

The conclusion is that the boy has not been learning new knowledge from Socrates, but remembering "true opinions, roused up by questioning", which "his soul must have been learning through all time."⁽¹⁾

Such is Plato's doctrine of 'innate ideas' in its simplest form, which seems to have guided Al Ghazali's theory given in Al Ihya'. Here he writes of 'ulūm darūriyyah' (literally, "necessary items of knowledge"), which, he says, are innate in the heart and emerge when there is a stimulus to cause their appearance. They seem not to come to the mind from outside, but to be hidden within it ready to emerge. This, he says, is analogous to the way in which, when we dig a well, water gathers beneath the earth and appears in the well; but what thus becomes visible in the well is not new. The practice of drawing analogies from the events of everyday life is a favourite device of Al Ghazali; and it is reasonable to surmise that his picture of water welling up when the earth is dug is a parable of Plato's doctrine of reminiscence in response to questioning.

But if the form and structure of Al Ghazali's theory of innate ideas is Platonic, its inspiration derives from his own

(1) The Meno. pp.179 - 191.

religious training. He infers their existence in an argument dependent on the meaning of the Arabic word "Fitrah". Elsewhere in this study (See Part page) I have attempted to interpret this much/disputed term. Here it is sufficient to say that Al Ghazali implies with it his belief that man is created with an innate faith in God.⁽¹⁾

The Process of Reminiscence

How then are we to explain the fact that some people lack this faith or belief in God? To this Al Ghazali replies: "Belief in God is fixed in man by nature, but there are two kinds of people: (1) those who have turned away and forgotten - the unbelievers; (2) those who have thought and recollected." The former are like one who is asked to give evidence, but forgets through negligence.⁽²⁾

"To describe this process as 'remembering' is not difficult, according to him, for remembering is of two kinds: the first is when one recalls something one has experienced but which has now disappeared; the second is to recall something which has not come to one by experience and must have been implanted by nature."⁽³⁾

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p.77.7.

(2) Ihya' Vol.I p.77

(3) Ihya' Vol.I p.77

These innate ideas are the image of the knowledge that exists in the eternal realm (Al Lawh Al-Mahfūz). They are not clear enough however to make their appearance before the time of adolescence because of the physical immaturity of the child's heart; he says "the heart is like the eye, and the mind in it is like sight." This mind directs its power towards the knowable, as the eyesight directs its power towards visible, objects. The power of sight is a subtle entity which is absent in the state of blindness, and present in the state of having sight. It is present even if the eyes are shut or darkness is falling. Knowledge which occurs through mind in the heart is like the power of sight in the eye. The absence of ideas from the eye of the heart during childhood until the age of ⁽¹⁾tamyiz resembles the absence of the vision in the eye until the time when the sun rises.

The Pen with which God inscribes ideas on the pages of the heart corresponds to the disc of the sun which gives light to the universe. The reason why these ideas do not appear in the heart of the child before tamyiz is that the heart is not yet fit for the reception of the actual ideas. The Pen is the instrument specially used by God to cause these ideas to emerge

(1) The age of tamyiz here is the time when reason starts to be fully developed as is clear from the analogy of the sunrise.

in the heart. In the Quran God said: "It is He who taught by
(1)
the Pen, taught man what he did not know."

Al Ghazali's choice of the Pen as main cause of this emergence reveals a profound belief in the divine power. According to him all ideas existed long before in the divine realm; they were inscribed on the Preserved Tablet. To Al Ghazali then, the cause of reminiscence is the Pen by which God "taught man what he did not know." At first sight this view is at variance with Plato's, according to which the chief aid in reminiscence is the living voice. Nevertheless I do not interpret Al Ghazali's formula as denying the importance of the living voice. As already shown he expressly states that innate (2) ideas emerge in response to a stimulus (sabab). I here venture the suggestion that this stimul^us, which is symbolized by the process of digging the earth in order that water may well up, is none other than the living voice. That being so, the Pen, which Al Ghazali propounds as "cause of emergence of ideas", must be interpreted as a cause behind a cause, in other words, the ultimate stimul^us, which is the divine power.

The child passes through two states in respect of the occurrence of ideas.

(1) Primary ideas, such as the knowledge of the impossibility

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.14³² Quran 96 - 45.

(2) Ihya' Vol.I p.77.

of the impossible and the possibility of the possible, actually exist in the heart of the child. But speculative knowledge exists only potentially. The child has these potential ideas, in the same way as a person who is learning to write possesses the ink-pot, the pen and a knowledge of the alphabet, although he does not know how to combine the letters; he is nearing the stage of being able to write.

(2) Other ideas come to the child through experience and speculation. They are stored within him as it were, and ready for him to consult whenever he wishes. The learner may now be compared to one who has mastered the art of penmanship, and can be described as a penman because of his capacity to write even if he is not actively engaged in writing. The state when knowledge is possessed in this way is thus described by Al Ghazali: "this stage of human knowledge is the highest, although within it there are countless degrees, since people vary in proportion to the quantity and quality of their knowledge, and also in the method of attainment. It occurs to some hearts through revelation and to others through instruction. They also vary in the rapidity or slowness of their reception of ideas. This is what constitutes the difference in degree of knowledge between the scholars, philosophers, saints and prophets. Highest of these ranks the prophet to whom all or nearly all realities are directly

(1)
manifested."

These stages are an interesting though not quite original feature; for we encounter them first in the Psychology of Avicenna, which is mainly Aristotelian. Al Ghazali has, however, put his own stamp on it by applying it to his theory of "innate ideas", and the problem of their emergence. This augments the educational significance that he attaches to them.

As presented by Al Ghazali the 'stages' form the framework of our mental development. In the first stage our hearts contain all primary ideas. This excludes those obtained by a process of logical reasoning; concerning these, he says, we possess not the ideas themselves, but the capacity for acquiring them. Our power of thinking is not yet mature but is approaching that stage. In the second stage our understanding advances; both 'experience' and 'speculation' have begun to play a part. There is now a double source of ideas; the forms upon which knowing depends may be innate within us, but they can only become effective in constituting knowledge when we experience things that live, in a sense, within us; that includes of course the words of others from which we learn. People vary in their capacity of attaining ideas: some

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.7.28

have direct and un^aid^aed intuition; others depend upon the help that those who know more than themselves can give - teachers in fact.

Original Ideas.

The problem of original ideas - how and whence they appear has puzzled thinkers on education in all periods. Even Plato with his strong emphasis on reminiscence as the essential element in the learning process does not ignore or deny the part played by experience, since his "questioning" is in fact a form of experience, though operating through a process of reminiscence.

Al Ghazali, as his exposition of the term 'aql makes clear (see Part I p 30), while allowing the existence of innate ideas, is at pains to limit his conception of their field of action, since there are, too, acquired ideas, which enter the mind through the senses; and perception through the senses is the first step in the learning process. Here he speaks of al mudrik, 'the perceiver' - the medium through which we obtain all that we can speak of as sensory knowledge.

Al Ghazali's own words seem to confirm the foregoing account of this theory of learning. In his analysis of the elements of the heart he writes: "The third is the perceiver (al mudrik) whose function is to get to know (yata'arrafa) physical objects. It is like a spy. It is represented by the

senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, touching etc. (sense perception). The 'perceiver' (mudrik) is of two kinds: - that which resides in the outward dwellings (the senses); () that which resides in the inward dwellings, which are five in number. A person, for example, seeing an object and then closing his eyes perceives an image within himself. This takes place in the imaginative part of the brain. Then the picture remains within his mind through a special faculty which is the retentive part. He reasons about what he retains by combining some of these images with others. Then he recalls what he has forgotten and so remembers it. Then he harmonizes the sense images in his imagination through the faculty of "common-sense" - (Al hiss Al mushtarak). Therefore faculties are the internal, common-sense, imagination, reasoning, memorization and retention.⁽¹⁾

This notion that the mind is divided into various faculties is borrowed from Avicenna.⁽²⁾ Al Ghazali has, however, confused the issue with conflicting statements concerning the position and function of "common-sense". At times he shows it beginning to operate after the imagination, and he writes: "The mind harmonizes (yajma') all the 'sensed ideas' in the

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III p.533.

(2) Avicenna's Psychology, English Translation of Kitāb Al Najāh by F. Rahmān, pp.30-31.

imagination by the faculty of "common-sense"; but he concludes his introduction of these faculties by listing "common-sense" before imagination, thus: "There are within the mind the faculties of "common-sense", imagination, reasoning, memorization and retention". As, however, this division is very similar to that of Avicenna, it may be assumed that he assigns to 'common sense' the function of receiving the contents of the five senses, after which the function of imagination begins. This, however, is not clearly expressed, and Al Ghazali is weak on what Avicenna speaks of as internal senses.

These, then, are the faculties that Al Ghazali groups under the name (mudrik) 'perceiver' and expounds according to their function in the learning process. His chain of mental operations leaves no doubt that in his view our ideas of the outside world come from the senses. Here he anticipates the English empirical school of Locke, whose principal tenet was that "all ideas come from experience". The doctrine is clearly expressed in the following passage from Locke's "Essay concerning Human Understanding" Book II, Ch.I, Para.23: "Since there appear not to be any ideas in the mind before the senses have conveyed any in, I conceive that ideas in the understanding are coeval with sensation; which is such an impression or motion made in some part of the body, as

produces some perception in the understanding. In time the mind comes to reflect on its own operation about the ideas got by sensation, and thereby stores itself with a new set of ideas which I call ideas of reflection.

The impressions then that are made on our senses by outward objects that are extrinsical to the mind, and its own operations about these impressions, reflected on by itself, as proper objects to be contemplated by it, are, I conceive, the original of all knowledge."

Elsewhere in the Ihyā' a highly pictorial exposition of the functions of the cognitive faculties reveals the close resemblance of this part of his theory to Locke's. He writes: "The mudrik (the perceiver)," that is, the perceiving element in man, "resides in the heart, which sits like a king in his kingdom. It appoints the imaginative power which has its seat in the cerebrum as its postmaster-general (sahib al barid) because all the sense information is gathered in it; it appoints the retentive power which resides in the back of the brain as its treasurer (khāzin), the speech organ as its interpreter (turjumān), the active members as its clerks (kuttāb) and the five senses as its spies (jawāsis). The heart holds each of them (the five senses) responsible for the information of a specific region. It appoints as agents, the power of seeing for the world of colour, that of hearing for

the world of sound, of smelling for the world of scent, etc. These senses are news-reporters (ashab akhbār), they glean ideas from the outside regions and in turn deliver them to the postmaster-general, namely imaginative power, and this in turn delivers them to the treasurer, which is the retentive power; the treasurer then exhibits them to the king and the king in turn extracts from them what he requires for the management of his kingdom.⁽¹⁾"

Al Ghazali and Locke thus agree in assigning a predominant role to sensation and experience in the cognitive process. But here the resemblance ends; for whereas Locke's whole philosophy rests largely on a denial of the existence of innate ideas, and arises out of a desire to prove this, Al Ghazali not only finds a place for innate ideas in the cognitive process (See p. 62), but propounds yet another set of ideas that are neither innate nor acquired through sensation. He indicates this when he speaks of 'aqī' as signifying the qualities peculiar to the human heart, viz: cognition ('ilm) and conation (irādah). 'Ilm, he says, "is the abstract knowledge of things secular and spiritual; these things are beyond the scope of the senses and other animals cannot take part in them."⁽²⁾ 'Ilm is thus the quality of the mind that

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III p.8.73.

(2) Ihyā' Vol.III p.7.7.

sees the self-evidence of universal statements.

The influence of Aristotle's theory of the Rational Faculty is very marked in Al Ghazali's discussion of abstract thought. This faculty knows without a Physical organ and so it follows that it knows itself, the organ and the act of knowing. The mental operation here is purely abstract; all these according to him can not belong to the category of empirical knowledge nor to the category of innate ideas. They are rather a distinct class having its own characteristic. Al Ghazali conceives general ideas - or universals - as belonging to this class. Here he lists categories that can be interpreted neither as empirical knowledge nor as innate ideas. These include (1) under secular knowledge, mathematical truths, (2) under metaphysical facts, which he describes as spiritual (ukhrawiyah), the conception of God, His deity and other attributes; finally (3) our generalisations: these he terms logical ('aqliyyah).

Spiritual Process of Learning

Al Ghazali speaks also of another process of learning. This process is a purely spiritual one, it springs from his mystical leanings. Now some knowledge is neither innate, nor reached by reason through the rational faculties, nor acquired through sensation, as already explained. It is beyond the scope of the senses. It enters through the 'internal door' (Al-Bab Al

Dākhilī) which, as Al Ghazali thinks, leads to the invisible world, the divine realm where the perfect ideas are found.

Here is Al Ghazali speaking of his theory: "It should be known that the wonders of the heart are beyond sense perception, because the heart itself is beyond the scope of senses, and that which is not perceived through the senses is difficult for the intellect to grasp, and can best be grasped through an analogy drawn from sense experience; therefore we give an example in order to make this clear even to a simple mind.

"Let us suppose there is a pool. It is possible for water to be directed into it from above through streams running into it. It is possible also to deepen the bottom by removing the soil until a spring of pure water is reached. Then water wells up from within the pool. This water is purer and has a more constant flow. It may also be deeper and more abundant. The heart, then, is like a pool, knowledge is like the water, and the five senses are like the streams (anḥār); it is possible for knowledge to be directed to the heart through the streams of the senses until the heart is filled with it; it is also possible for a man to block these streams by going into seclusion (khalwah) or shutting his eyes, and then he makes for the depth of the heart, purifying it by removing from it the layers of ~~veils~~ until the spring of knowledge wells up

(1)
from within it."

At this point Al Ghazali sees an objection, to which, however, he fails to give a satisfactory answer. "How," he asks, "could knowledge possibly overflow from within the heart seeing that the heart itself is devoid of knowledge? It is one of the secret wonders of the heart, and it is improper to disclose it in a discussion of practical knowledge (*Ilm Al Mu-āmalah*)."

None the less, some light has to be shed on the question in view of its bearing on the present enquiry. Here Al Ghazali uses the theory of forms or ideas to explain how knowledge could flow up from within the heart itself. He believes that there are various forms of reality, or ideas that derive from the divine realm, that is to say, the world where perfect knowledge is stored. The realities of things are inscribed on the Preserved Tablets (*Al Lawh Al-Mahfūz*), in the same way as an architect plans the structure of the house on a blank sheet and then puts it into effect according to that plan. So too did the Creator of heaven and earth. He inscribed the plan of the Universe from beginning to end on the Preserved Tablet and then put it into effect accordingly. Now the universe has come into existence after the fashion of that plan and there issues from it, (the

Universe) an image to sense and imagination. A person who looks at the sky and the earth and then closes his eyes perceives the image of the sky and earth through his imagination as if he were still looking at it; had the sky and the earth ceased^d to exist, then he would still find their image within him as if he were witnessing them. Then there proceeds an effect from his imagination to the heart, and it is by virtue of this that the images experienced by sense and imagination occur in the heart. This eventual image of the universe in the heart is in accord with that which occurs in the imagination, and that which occurs in the imagination is in accord with the actual universe (perceived by sense) and the actual universe is in accord with what exists in the Divine realm (The Preserved Tablet). Therefore reality has four forms or degrees of existence: I. Existence in the Preserved Tablet, which precedes its actual existence; II. Its actual existence; III. Its imaginary existence, that is to say, the existence of its form in the imagination; IV. Its mental existence (wajūd⁽¹⁾ ‘aqli), namely the existence of its image in the heart.

To return to the original question, how ideas flow up within the heart, Al Ghazali states: "it is possible that the image of the universe can come into the heart either through

(1) Iḥyā Vol.III pp. 17 - 18.

the senses or through the Preserved Tablet, as the image of the Sun can occur in the eye either through looking at it directly or through looking at the water which reflects its image. Whenever the curtain between the heart and the Preserved Tablet is removed the heart sees the things inscribed on the Tablet, and knowledge overflows from it. The heart no longer needs any perception through the senses. This resembles the flowing up of the water from the depth of the earth. If, however, the heart pays attention to the images that come from sensation, this becomes distraction, which acts as a veil between it and the Preserved Tablet; similarly in the analogy of the pool, when the water collects from the streams it prevents the flowing up of water from within the earth. Thus the heart has two doors, one of which leads to the invisible world or the Divine realm (The Preserved Tablet), the other ^{to} ~~of~~ the five senses which are in contact with the visible world; this being to some extent a copy of the invisible one. As for the unclosing of the inner door of the invisible world and the seeing of the Preserved Tablet, it is obvious how this happens when one considers the wonders of dreams (ru'yā), and how the soul during sleep, and when senses are inactive, sees what is going to happen in the future or what has happened in the past. Thus the difference between the knowledge of the prophets and saints and that of the philosophers is that the

former comes from within the heart through the door which leads to the invisible world, (Ālam Al Malakūt), the latter comes through the doors of senses which lead to the visible world (Ālam Al Mulk).⁽¹⁾"

Now what Al Ghazali means by his theory is that there are some ideas which are acquired, yet are acquired not through sensation or the rational faculties, but through prophetic insight, which receives the ideas directly from the Divine realm which is beyond the sphere of the senses. We notice that in his application of the theory of forms Al Ghazali adopts an approach different from that of Plato.

Plato², makes the comparison between "imperfect ideas" - those that are copies of plans that derive from actual objects existing in the visible world, and the perfect "ideas", which exist in the Divine realm. Whether or not Al Ghazali approves this comparison, he gives it little prominence. This, I think, is due to his Sufi belief that the perfect knowledge can be attained provided the screen which veils the heart is raised, so that the heart faces the Preserved Tablet, where it can look at the Divine reality; the removal of the veil is a spiritual process which can be achieved only through disciplining the heart and purifying it.

(1) Ihya' Vol.III pp. 18, 19.

Process of Reasoning

The introduction of a theory of the nature of reasoning and its relation to different kinds of knowledge is a courageous attempt made by Al Ghazali to show that all knowledge, including religious truths can be subjected to tafakkur and is open to confirmation by reason.

In his treatment of this part of his theory Al Ghazali deals with two points of great importance to any discussion of his general theory of learning - the nature of tafakkur ("reasoning") and its effect on our actions. As to its nature, he defines tafakkur as: "The Presentation in the mind of two propositions in order to deduce from them a third - the conclusion (ma'rifah). A person inclined towards the present life who wants to know that the Hereafter is more deserving of desire, has two ways of getting to know that it is so. The first is to hear from another person that the Hereafter is more deserving of desire and then accept that statement without awareness of why it is so. He who accepts will then conduct his actions according to his belief that the Hereafter is more deserving of desire. This, according to Al Ghazali, is not ma'rifah 'knowledge', but simple acceptance of belief on authority (See p. 102).

The second way (and this is ^{the} point under review) is to know

that that which lasts longer is more deserving of desire; then, since a man knows that the Hereafter lasts longer than the present life, he may deduce from these two premises a third proposition - which is the conclusion - that the Hereafter is more deserving of desire. This last judgement cannot be secured except through the two premises (ma'rifatayn) that precede it. This threefold mental operation - two premises producing a conclusion - is tafakkur, and is variously called i'tibar, tadhakkur, nazar, and ta'ammul. The last two are synonymous with tafakkur - "syllogistic reasoning". But i'tibar and tadhakkur have special implications: the former originally meant "traverse" and here refers to the presentation of two premises with the implication that the mind traverses through them to a third judgement.

But if this traversing does not occur, and what happens is only a halting (wuquf) at the two premises, then the process is called tadhakkur, a term whose literal meaning is "recollection", but, as used here, embraces some such additional notion as "deliberation".

Here, in brief, is this terminology as Al Ghazali applies it: tafakkur, ta'ammul and nazar, all convey the notion of the mind searching for a third judgement, (tafakkur), being of rather wider connotation than the other two. Their fruit (i.e. the fruit of reasoning), first and foremost, is the growth of knowledge and

the acquisition of new ideas, while the fruit of tadhakkur (deliberation) is the reiteration of ideas, which thus persist in the mind. When ideas (or propositions) are arranged in the mind in suitably combined ^spremises, a fresh idea is produced. Thus one idea is the result of others, and, if this new one is again set in correct combination with another, then yet another is produced, and knowledge advances progressively. But only he who knows how to reason can acquire knowledge in this way; and the majority of people are handicapped by "lack of capital", namely the basic ^spremises out of which knowledge and ideas are generated.
(1)

Knowledge of tafakkur comes, in very rare instances - as to the Prophets - through an inborn divine light in the heart; but normally through education. It works differently in different minds: one man may reach a conclusion from valid ^spremises unawares; another may be conscious of the process, but lack the ability to express it in words. He may, for instance, be convinced that the Hereafter is more deserving of desire than the present; but, if called upon to prove it, may be unable to, although his judgement rests on the valid ^spremises already outlined.

Further fruits of reasoning, in addition to the growth of

(1) Ihya' Vol.IV pp. 363¹³-4.

knowledge, are a change (1) in (ahwāl) the "states" of the heart, and consequently (2) in (a'māl) "the actions" of the individual. But these fruits are subordinate to ilm ("knowledge"); for they are the result of its presence in the heart.

From this chain of cause and effect it follows that our acts are directed by our emotions, and that these are the result of the new knowledge that we obtain through reasoning. Hence reasoning is the starting-point and the key of all forms of good.⁽¹⁾

It has been necessary to stress the syllogistic comparison between the present life and the Hereafter, because it is Al Ghazali's preferred illustration of the way in which thinking affects the emotions and - through them - actions. Tafakkur shows us the world to come as more desirable than this world; once this knowledge is established in the heart, the attitude of the latter changes; it becomes interested in the world to come, and indifferent to this world.

This "attitude" is what is meant by hāl; and it will be seen that five stages are involved in the complete process of change wrought by tafakkur: (1) Deliberation (tadhakkur), or the placing together of the two premises^s in the intellect; (2) Reasoning (tafakkur), or the search for new knowledge to be

(1) Ihyā' Vol.IV p.364

produced from the premises; (3) Inference (nazar or ta'ammul), or the occurrence of the desired knowledge and its enlightenment of the heart; (4) The change in the attitude of the heart, due to enlightenment; (5) the change in the behaviour of the person, due to the changed attitude.⁽¹⁾

Al Ghazali's theory of learning is thus aristotelian in the importance it assigns to the syllogism as an aid in the production of knowledge. What makes his theory original is his attempt to reduce Sufi and religious truth to a system of progressive syllogistic inference. The accord between intellectualism and revelation which he sought was indeed not attainable; but the attempt throws interesting light on the limitations he imposes on the status of revelation.

Stages of Child's Development

In his theory of education Al Ghazali goes into the child's psychological development and the stages through which he progresses - not, indeed, very fully, but to an extent and in a manner far ahead of his age. For this reason, and for the light it throws on his view of the mental and emotional activities, the subject will repay a brief examination.

His study of the forms and varieties of pleasure is strictly

(1) Ihya' Vol.IV p.364

psychological. All forms of pleasure derive from our sensations (idrakāt). The individual is made up of many faculties (quwā) and instincts (gharā'iz), each of which has its own variety of pleasure - this being secured through the successful performance of its peculiar function. These faculties and instincts are fixed in man, each having a special purpose according to its nature. For instance, the proper function of the "instinct" of anger is to avenge; therefore its pleasure lies in accomplishing acts of vengeance. Or take the "instinct" of appetite: its proper function is to provide the body with the necessary satisfactions; its pleasure, therefore, is secured through achieving this. So too with all the forms of pleasure appertaining to the faculties of hearing, seeing, smelling, etc. Each one of these faculties is always experiencing either pain or pleasure arising from the things sensed. Intelligence is a faculty, called both 'aql ("reason") and Al-Nūr Al-Ilāhī the "Divine Light". The proper function of this power is to know the true nature of things; therefore its pleasure lies in and is secured by the exercise of this function. The forms of pleasure appertaining to knowledge, vary greatly in proportion to the nobility of the knowledge and this nobility in turn varies according to the nature of the thing known. The highest form of pleasure is therefore found in the knowledge of God. ⁽¹⁾

(1) Ihyā' Vol. IV pp.264-5.

From this brief summary of Al Ghazali's account of the different forms of pleasure we proceed to our original question, namely the different stages of psychological growth. Referring to this he says that: (1) When the child begins to move about there emerges in him a tendency through which he finds delight in play to the degree that play becomes to him the most interesting thing. (2) Next comes an interest in ornaments and dress, which makes him indifferent to the pleasure of play. (3) There follows an interest in sexual intercourse, expressed in the desire for women, to indulge which he forsakes all previous interests until (4) this takes second place to the craving for leadership and superiority, the satisfaction of which is the highest and most powerful of wordly pleasures. (5) Finally this, too, is superseded by a loftier power: the individual experiences the pleasure of the knowledge of God, of His attributes and His acts; and, when this stage is reached, he ⁽¹⁾scorns all previous interests.

Al Ghazali gives no clear indications of the ages at which the three earliest of these stages appear. He evades the difficulty by assigning the interest in play to the time of tamyiz (apparently the "sensus communis"), in ornament and sexual intercourse to the times of adolescence and puberty

(1) Ihya' Vol.IV p.267 (? 268).

(bulūgh). As, however, he makes the first stage coincide with the child's first experiences of moving from one place to another, it is safe to place it at about the age of three, when the child is engrossed in the simplest forms of play.

It is more difficult to determine precise ages for Al Ghazali's next two stages (the interests in sexual intercourse and finery). He himself assigns both to the age of bulūgh. This, on the face of it, conflicts with his scheme of classifying development by stages. I am therefore inclined to give the ambiguity a terminological explanation and to suggest that Al Ghazali has stretched the term bulūgh to cover both puberty and adolescence, perhaps not wishing to draw a rigid line of demarcation between the two stages; but the effect is to make bulūgh the time for both the second and third stages. This being the case I take bulūgh as the starting age for the sexual interest and adolescence (elsewhere referred to by Al Ghazali as the time of tamyiz) for the interest in ornament etc. The closing age of this period is clearly stated as about twenty. From twenty to forty the interest in leadership dominates, and from forty onwards the interest in wisdom supersedes all. ⁽¹⁾

Intelligence itself undergoes a course of gradual development, we are told, though Al Ghazali fails to give a clear picture as

(1) Ihyā' Vol.IV p.267 4.

to the nature of this development, yet he holds the view that intelligence continues its growth until a late age. It is not only the items of knowledge attained (‘ulūm) or experiences (tajārib) that increase, but the intelligence itself as an inborn power is subject to this gradual growth.

This inborn power is like a light; it rises in the soul, its dawn comes at the age of adolescence, and its growth continues slowly until it is complete at the age of forty.

It is like the daylight: the beginning of it is so faint that it can hardly be felt, but it (the light) gradually increases until it is completely developed by the rise of the sun-disc. It is indeed the natural order of God that all things develop gradually, even the sex instinct is subject to this rule; it does not appear at once at the time of puberty. Furthermore, all human faculties and qualities are subject to the same course of development.⁽¹⁾

The Individual Differences

In the section of Part I dealing with Al Ghazali's "definition of keywords" prominence was given to the importance and complexity of the term ‘aql. Coming to the problem of individual differences Al Ghazali handles the phenomenon under the heading: "Differences among people in ‘aql." It will be

(1) Ihyā' Vol.I p. 78.6.

remembered that he assigned a wide field of concepts to this word, and these, with one exception, are here elaborated into a compact body of doctrine, which suggests that Al Ghazali's keywords have exercised an influence over his thought. From the group of entities symbolized by 'agl' and exhibiting differences of degrees and kind in different individuals the one exception is innate ideas ('ulūm darurīyah), which, he says, are the same in all people. For the rest, the qualities symbolized by 'agl' are those which are variable as among different people, thus:

(1) 'agl' as a power which exercises control over desires is evidently subject to these differences, moreover, a person may differ from time to time in degree of control. This is attributed to one of the following causes: -

A) - Difference in the object of desire, for a person may be able to ^psupress one form of desire more easily than another. Desire for sex, for instance, can be more easily ^psupressed with increasing maturity through old age. A younger man may be unable to avoid adultery; but when he is of maturer age and his 'agl' is complete, he may be able to abandon it, whereas the desire for leadership grows stronger with advancing years.

B) - A difference in the amount of knowledge, which leads to awareness of the harm of a particular desire. This, for instance, is why the doctor is able to avoid harmful food while others equally intelligent fall victim to it. The latter may

indeed have a general notion that the food is harmful; but the doctor's knowledge is more perfect and his fear, consequently, stronger. Touching the avoidance of harmful food, then, the doctor has more 'aq1'. Fear is in this case the agent by which 'aq1 represses desire. Similarly the learned man ('alim) is better able to avoid wrong-doing - in other words, he has more 'aq1 - than the less learned or ignorant man.

C) - The difference in the ability to 'control' desire may also be due to difference in the degree of intelligence; for when intelligence is high the individual control of his desires becomes more probable.

Here^{it} is to be noted that differences in the ability to control desires may be due merely to differences in the intensity of the desire. In such cases the term 'aq1 is not applicable.

(2) 'Aq1 as 'experiences' ('ulūm at tajarib) is subject to individual differences. For individuals differ in their insight as a result of differences in their experiences.

(3) What 'aq1 stands for in its sense of intelligence is undoubtedly subject to individual differences. It resembles a light which shines in the soul and it differs in the same way as the light of sight, for obviously there is difference between the blear-eyed and the clear-sighted. Had not differences in intelligence existed, people would not have differed in their

understanding. But in this matter individuals are divided into (1) the "stupid" or "dull", who can be taught only by dint of a great effort on the part of the teacher; (2) the intelligent or bright, who understands at the slightest hint; (3) the genius ⁽¹⁾ (kāmil) from whom truths emanate without any instruction, ⁽²⁾ as in the case of the prophets.

Differences in intelligence and the degree of understanding are like the differences that exist in the nature of the land. There is a kind of land on which water gathers until it becomes so abundant that it overflows spontaneously into springs; another kind needs digging in order that the water may be diverted into channels; yet another kind is that which although it is dug, will yield no results. This is due to the differences in the nature of the land and consequently its qualities. So, too, ~~with~~ the differences between individuals spring from differences in their intelligence. Here Al Ghazali quotes the following Tradition describing the Throne: "The Angels said, O Lord, hast Thou created anything that is greater than the Throne, and He said, Yes, the intelligence. They said, How great is it? and He said, Far from being described! The knowledge of it is incomprehensible! Hast thou any knowledge

(1) Literally 'perfect'.

(2) Ihyā' Vol.I p.78.13.

of the number of the sands? and they said No. Then said God, I have created 'intelligences' as numerous as the number of the sands. Some people have been given a single grain, some have been given two, some three ... and some have been given a load and some more than a load."⁽¹⁾

It is noticeable here that Al Ghazali's main emphasis is upon individual differences in ‘aql in its various meanings including 'intelligence'. As regards differences in the traits of personality, he says nothing in a direct manner though in his moral teachings he gives an account of the different forms of good character which go to make stable and healthy personality. Individuals differ as much in moral as in physical health.⁽²⁾ This will be discussed in its proper place.

The teacher should pay attention to these differences. He should take into account the mental variations among the individuals he teaches; he must deal with the pupil according to his understanding, and must not teach him what lies beyond his capacity. Such procedure will only stunt the growth of the pupil's intelligence, and confuse him. The teacher must follow the example of the Prophet who said "all we prophets are directed to set people in their proper places, and address

(1) Ihyā' Vol.I p.78.30.

(2) Ihyā' Vol.III p.52.28.

them according to the amount of their intelligence". He should disclose the truth to his pupil only when he is certain that (1) he is capable of understanding it.

The backward pupil (al-muta'allim al-qasir) should be taught only what is intelligible and appropriate to his intelligence. The teacher should moreover avoid mentioning to him that behind any teaching there are difficult questions of which he will not speak, for to do so will damp the pupil's interest in what is easy, and cause him to expect confusion of (2) mind.

In accordance with his theory of individual differences Al Ghazali holds the view that the 'common people' (al-'awam^m), who are simple-hearted and whose intelligence is incapable of understanding difficult questions, should abide by the bond of religion and adhere to the traditional beliefs of the early Muslims without anthropomorphism (tashbih i.e. private or metaphorical interpretation of the text of the Quran and the Traditions); they should not be driven to any point of confusion but left quietly to pursue their trades. If a person of this kind is plunged into difficult questions and taught the different interpretations of the text (ta'wilat al-zahir)^{he} will be freed from the bond of the common people, but it will not be

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p. 51.2

(2) Ihya' Vol.I p. 51 -

easy for him to belong to the company of the intellectuals (al khawass). Thus the barrier which keeps him from disobedience will be removed and he will turn into a rebellious devil and cause destruction no less to himself than others.

Such a person should not be plunged into the advanced studies, but his education should be limited to teaching him the fundamental acts of worship and a code of honesty in the trade which he pursues. His heart must be filled with the hope of Heaven and the fear of Hell as taught in the Quran and doubtful questions should be completely avoided. In general the door of intellectual discussion should not be opened to the common people, for that would hinder them from practising their trades on which the structure of society and consequently the life of the intellectuals depend. (1)

It must be admitted that Al Ghazali here advocates a cultural policy calculated to deny all opportunity of higher education to the greater part of the community. However truly it may be urged that his motive is to temper education to the intellectual capacity of the individual, two factors, both essential to the practical application of the policy must be deplored: (1) Al Ghazali's division of the community would operate on a basis of social discrimination; (2) The education

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p.51

allowed to the excluded categories would amount to no more than the minimum of religious education together with such moral precepts as conduce to professional integrity - honesty in trade, loyalty to society, and so forth. Their sole share in the cultural life of the community is to provide the labour on which the structure of society and the welfare of their intellectual superiors depend.

This part of Al Ghazali's theory is at variance with the generally accepted Muslim view, which recognizes no distinctions among people other than by the measure of their piety. Certain theological schools do, indeed, withold^h the study of logic and philosophy from students who, through lack of intelligence, might thereby be led to views in conflict with the faith, which they would not have the intellectual ability to refute. But to extend the restriction to the whole field of higher education and apply it to categories determined by special considerations is peculiar to Al Ghazali.

The origin of an idea so alien to Muslim tradition and practice must lie outside the boundaries of Muslim thought. The influence of Plato's "Republic" as the model for the presentation of Al Ghazali's theory of human nature has already been shown (see Part. I p. 58) We shall probably not be wrong in tracing the source of this repressive element in Al Ghazali's educational theory to the social divisions in Plato's State -

Al Ghazali's "Intellectuals" corresponding vaguely to Plato's "Philosophers". Here again Al Ghazali's tendency towards science and scholarship shows itself in rivalry with his Sufi and religious principles.

P A R T I I I

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE

MIND IN RELATION TO REALITY

The relation of mind to reality is likened by Al Ghazali to the relation of a mirror to that which it reflects. The reflected object has a form, and it is this form or image which is reflected in the mirror. So too every object of knowledge has a form or image, and this is reflected in the mind.

On this view there are evidently three elements in the process of knowing: - I) - Mind; II) - Reality; III) - the occurrence of the image of reality in the mind. To describe this triple process in terms of function Al Ghazali identified the mind as the 'knower' in which the image of reality is reflected, reality as the 'known', and the occurrence of the image of reality in the mind as the 'knowing'⁽¹⁾.

We are to understand that both reality and mind were in existence before 'knowing'. Al Ghazali illustrates the pre-existence of mind and reality by the example of the 'laying hold' of a sword. Here the sword has existed independently; so, too, has the hand whose function is to grasp; but the act of 'grasping' did not exist before this process took

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.11.12.

(1)
place.

Thus Al Ghazali holds an idealist theory which carries with it beliefs in both the antecedence of reality and the autonomy of the mind; the knowing process, which is a process of reflection, belongs to the natural order of human activities, whereas mind itself, and likewise reality, transcend this order.

The mind, which has the function of 'reflecting' in this process, is according to Al Ghazali an immaterial entity (latifah) whose function is to rule and direct. Reality itself, that which is 'reflected' in the knowing process, has existed long before the actual universe, for the actual universe is a copy of this eternal reality, which exists in the divine realm.

Hence reality is not the invention of human experience, nor is it - as the pragmatist believes - the product of environmental changes. Rather the images of reality form our ideas of the universe and to reflect these images is the natural function of our intellect. The process of reflecting these images is in fact the operation of copying the truth, and this is the process of 'learning' or 'getting to know'.

The 'Knowing' Conditions

From the previous section it is evident that Al Ghazali in his epistemology inclines towards 'idealism', the theory that reality is eternal, and the function of mind is to reflect its images. The human mind however, does not always succeed in reporting accurately or, as Al Ghazali puts it, 'reflecting the truth', though the mind is by nature formed to perceive the truth; yet there are some defects both in the mind and outside it, which make the reflecting of the truth difficult or even impossible; the absence of these defects is a condition of knowing. Al Ghazali here uses the mirror analogy; the mirror, also, cannot always reflect the images of objects, for there may be flaws or obstacles which prevent its reflecting. There are five possible reasons why an image may not be reflected: I. A material defect in the mirror; if, for instance, it is not properly fashioned or polished; II. A soiling and dimming of the mirror, which may be faultless in itself; III. A wrong position; if the object to be reflected is behind the mirror; IV. The presence of a veil between mirror and object; V. Ignorance of the beholder where to seek the desired object (In this case, however, the defect attaches to the beholder, not to the mirror).

Human intellects are sometimes devoid of knowledge for one or more of five causes corresponding to those that bar the image from the mirror. These constitute Al Ghazali's

"conditions of knowledge". To avoid confusion in considering these, we need to be clear about Al Ghazali's terminology. In his theory of knowledge the three words, ma'rifah, haqiqah and iman, here respectively translated "knowledge", "truth" and "belief", are virtually synonymous terms. In propounding the conditions of knowledge (through the analogy of the mirror) Al Ghazali uses the first two words indiscriminately, and to cover a wide field of intellectual attainment and spiritual condition. I have attempted to use the terms in such a way as to distinguish what Al Ghazali appears to have in mind in each context. Here, then, are the five causes of the mind's inability to reflect Truth: I. Immaturity. A child's mind, says Al Ghazali, is not yet sufficiently formed to receive "knowledge", - he apparently means that knowledge which it is the function of education to impart.

(In the next three cases Al Ghazali seems to identify "knowledge" with the mystical states attained in successive stages of Sufi experience).

II. Mists and stains of vice, which gather on the intellect because of the multiplicity of desires. This mars the purity of the intellect and, consequently, its reflection of the "Truth".

III. Deviation (evidently at a higher stage, since the man is already regarded as pious). The pure mind may fail to catch

the reflection of the truth because it is facing the wrong direction; it may, he says, be concentrated upon the external details of worship, or on securing the means of livelihood, rather than upon meditating on the realities of Truth; only that on which it is reflecting can manifest itself to him.

IV. The presence of a veil. Here, evidently, the dangers at the lower stages have been passed, and a yet higher stage reached. Al Ghazali instances the obedient person who controls his desires and devotes his thoughts to a given truth, which, however, cannot manifest itself to him because some belief, due to his acceptance of authority (taglid), has veiled it from him.

V. Ignorance of the direction in which the seeker should expect to find the desired "Truth". Here Al Ghazali has evidently shifted to a different plane of knowledge, implying a totally different intellectual performance. The seeker, he now says, cannot attain knowledge of the unknown except through the recollection of previous knowledge, which must be cognate with the fresh knowledge he desires. This, constituting a third "knowledge", can only be secured through the harmonising and combining of two premises already known in such a manner that they yield a third "knowledge", previously unknown. This method of arranging knowledge in

the mind is known as 'meditation' (tafakkur)⁽¹⁾, and the intellectual operation it requires is evidently Logic. Al Ghazali gives the analogy of a man who wishes to behold his back in a mirror. He can only do this by placing a second mirror in the right position. Here we have the three parts of the syllogism: the two mirrors symbolize the major and minor terms, the man's back is the conclusion; the careful placing of the second mirror symbolizes the rules of the syllogism.⁽²⁾

Grades of Knowledge

We have seen that the terms 'knowledge' (ma'rifah), 'truth' (haqiqah) and 'belief' ('iman) are almost synonymous in Al Ghazali's epistemology. He does however distinguish three grades of 'belief' or 'knowledge':

I. The belief of the common people ('awamm); that is, belief through acceptance of authority.

(1) The free use of tafakkur to denote what is obviously intended as the syllogism is noticeable here. It reflects Al Ghazali's constant endeavour to harmonize religious and Sufi contemplation and logical thinking as it was explained in Part II.

(2) Ihya' Vol. III p.11⁷⁶ - 12.

II. The belief of the theologians (mutakallimīn), namely that which is supported by proofs; this kind of belief ranks very close to the first.

III. The belief of the (ʿarifīn) 'gnostics'⁽¹⁾ namely the knowledge experienced through the light of certitude.⁽²⁾

An illustration is given here to make the distinction clear. Our knowledge of 'X' being in the house has three degrees: -

The first is that we are informed of this by a person whose truthfulness is known to us and in whom we have confidence, and so we believe what he says by merely being informed.

The acceptance of authority is here the basis of our knowledge, and this corresponds to the belief of the common people. When they reach the age of maturity they have already learned the dogmatic beliefs from their parents and accepted them on authority (taglīd). They adhere to these beliefs without question and entertain no doubts about what is told them by their parents and teachers. As to the certainty, and hence the value of such knowledge, Al Ghazali

(1) This term - not to be confused with the Christian heretical sect - is here used to express the Sufi conception of "those who truly know God."

(2) Ihyā' Vol.III p.13.7.

maintains that knowledge in this sense has little clearness, embodies no revelation, and so does not cause the delight of the heart which is attained through the illumination of certitude. The possibility of error in this kind of knowledge is even greater especially in so far as it relates to religious beliefs.

The second degree is when our knowledge that 'X' is in the house is based on our hearing his voice inside the house although we cannot see him; thus we deduce from his voice that he is in the house. Our knowledge here is stronger than our knowledge through mere information. If we are informed that he is in the house and afterwards hear his voice, then our certainty is strengthened. The explanation in this case is that voices are usually associated with particular persons especially when there is a previous familiarity with the persons concerned. For instance, if one knows a person and then hears his voice one will deduce that this voice is the voice of that particular person. In this case, belief is based on inference but still the possibility of error exists, for the one voice may resemble another and may also be imitated, though this possibility does not usually occur to the mind of the hearer. Al Ghazali is concerned here with the kind of belief in which inference is the characteristic element, and it is important to notice that he considered

that the beliefs of theologians belong to this category.

The third degree is when our knowledge that 'X' is in the house is based on seeing him when we enter the house; this Al Ghazali believes is the true knowledge and complete revelation. It corresponds to the knowledge or belief of the mugarrabīn and the siddiqīn, 'the saints', because their belief is the result of vision. Hence, their knowledge embraces the characteristic of the first two categories, that of the common people and that of the theologians; but in addition it has its own characteristic in being a revelation in which there is no place for any possibility of error.

People who have knowledge of this third kind may differ in the amount of their knowledge and the degree of its clarity. The difference in clarity is easily seen in the example given. If we see 'X' in the house when he is near to us or in the courtyard when the sun is brilliant, our knowledge is complete; if we see him from a distance or in the dusk we become certain from his outline that it is he but we cannot perceive the details of his figure; and our knowledge is therefore incomplete. This difference is also to be found in men's visions of divine truths.

That the amount of knowledge which is gained through revelation varies can be illustrated by a similar example. If there are several persons in a house, you may see more than

one person; another may happen to see only one. Thus the amount of knowledge increases in proportion to the amount of the objects of knowledge (⁽¹⁾ma'ūmāt).

True knowledge and Vision

In his theory of knowledge Al Ghazali classified the "perceived" things into two kinds: I. Those which belong to the sphere of imagination; these are sensible things such as concrete or material forms, animate and inanimate objects. II. Those which belong to the sphere of the "abstract" or immaterial, such as the Deity of God, and all else that has no material existence, such as His knowledge, omnipotence and will. When a man sees a body and afterwards closes his eyes he will find the image of that body present to his imagination as if he were looking at it, but if he opens his eyes he will perceive the difference between the real and the imaginary form.

This difference is not a difference in the substance of the two forms, for the imaginary form is in agreement with the real, but the difference which exists is due only to the degree of clarity or revelation. The image of the concrete form is clearer than that of the imaginary form; an example of this is the person who is seen at the time of twilight and

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III, p.13 - 14.

before the spread of daylight, and then is seen again in full daylight; the difference between the two states lies only in the additional clarity. Hence imagination is the preliminary stage of perception; vision is more perfect than imagination, it is the highest form of revelation. The vision of the eye is called in Arabic ru'yah, and it is so called in virtue of its certainty. If God had created this power of perfect perception in the forehead, in the chest, or in any other part of the body, it would still deserve the same designation, ru'yah. If such certainty is found in another kind of revelation, a revelation other than the revealing of visible things to the eye, than this also can be given the name ru'yah - (vision). Thus we may speak of ru'yah as vision in relation to immaterial objects, the objects of knowledge. The apprehension of the objects of knowledge also has two degrees: the first is a preliminary, incomplete one, where the apprehension is not yet fully clarified. The second is that in which apprehension is complete and perfectly clear. Moreover between these two there is a gradation of clarity, as there is also in perceiving visible forms. It is only the final, complete form which is properly called ru'yah - the highest form of revelation.

The impossibility of such vision in this world is due to the bodily handicaps which stand as a veil between this

capacity for the highest revelation and the Deity of God.

It is part of the divine order that the shutting of the eye-lid bars the eye from the revelation of visible objects and stands as a veil between the eye and the object to be seen. If vision is to take place, the veil must be removed. If the veil is not removed the result is not vision, but mere imagination.

Similarly the human soul, so long as it is handicapped by bodily obstacles, will not arrive at the stage of complete vision of the immaterial objects of knowledge. These lie outside the scope of the imagination which has to do only with material things. Al Ghazali believes that even after death the veil is not completely removed, for the soul is still dimmed by the impact of this world; people differ, however, in the amount of this 'dimness' in proportion to their previous domination by bodily desires. There are some souls which are overloaded with lust and these are similar to the mirror on which so much stain has accumulated that there is no hope of polishing it. Some souls, however, have not been so corrupted, but these also differ one from another.

After the fulfilment^e of what God has promised, the Resurrection, the Judgment, and the measures and procedure of punishment and reward, and after the soul has become completely polished, the Divine Reality manifests itself. This is a revelation and illumination of things which were previously

known. It is like the clarification to the eye of that which was previously 'imagined'. This form of revelation is what is called ru'yah. The Vision of God is possible in the world to come provided that we do not understand it in the sense of 'perfection of imagination' in relation to a special visible object which has association with a location, for vision in this sense is quite out of place *in* relation to God. Al Ghazali is of the opinion that this highest knowledge^{or} 'vision' after death is a development of the "true knowledge" of God that was secured before death. He asserts that as the perfect knowledge of God in this world can be attained without any support from the imagination or any association of place, so too is the Vision in the next world. To emphasize this view Al Ghazali states: - "Indeed I assert that knowledge which is secured in this world is the same knowledge which becomes perfect or rather reaches the highest form of perfection and turns into Vision in the world to come. There would not be any difference between the Vision in the next world and the true knowledge in this world except in the increase of clarity or illumination", in the same way as we have pointed out in the instance of the imagined object becoming clearer in the natural vision of the eye. If our knowledge of God in this world has not been supported by images (surah) or special concepts, then it necessarily follows that there would be no such concepts in the perfection

of that very knowledge when it is elevated to the highest form of revelation. For this Vision is in substance the same as the previous "knowledge" and the only difference is the increase of the amount of clarity. God said (referring to the pious): - "Their light shines in front of them (bayna aydihim) and on their right hand. They say "Oh Lord complete for us our 'light'". Al Ghazali comments "the completion of light causes only an increase in clarity, and for this reason only the gnostics in this world can gain the stage of Vision in the world to come; for knowledge (in this world) is the seed which develops into Vision in the world to come, as a seed becomes a tree and a grain becomes corn."⁽¹⁾ Al Ghazali goes on to say that "he who does not plant the seed on his land cannot expect a palm to grow, and he who does not sow the grain cannot expect to reap a harvest! So, too, he who does not know God in this world cannot see Him in the world to come."

Division of Knowledge

The heart or soul, as is repeatedly asserted by Al Ghazali, is capable of apprehending the true nature of knowables, and hence knowledge that occurs in it is of two main kinds, natural and supernatural.

(1) Ihyā' Vol.IV p.267-9²⁷

Natural Knowledge

Al Ghazali calls natural knowledge 'rational' ('aqlīyyah) in the sense that it comes within the sphere of human reason and in relation to such knowledge he regards the approval of the rational element in man as final. He sub-divides this type of knowledge into two groups: -

I. Inborn, and II. Acquired, with, again, a two^{fold}-classification of the latter: a) Temporal or secular (dunyawīyyah), and b) Spiritual (ukhrawīyyah). Here is a brief account of the nature of each of them.

Al Ghazali means by rational knowledge the knowledge which is gained with the help of reason; it cannot be secured through acceptance of authority nor through mere 'hearsay' (sama').

This is divided into: I. Inborn, that is to say the knowledge which exists in man from birth, such as the knowledge that a thing cannot be both originated and ^eternal or existent and non-existent at the same time. Man finds this kind of knowledge inherent in his heart, but none knows its source nor how it occurs in the heart; though we know that God is the ultimate cause of this as of all things. II. Acquired, that is to say, knowledge gained by cultivation of the mental faculties; it is sub-divided as we have already stated into: -

a) - Temporal Knowledge, that is to say, the knowledge which is concerned with secular affairs such as medicine, arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and so forth.

b) - Spiritual knowledge, which Al Ghazali conceives as the knowledge of the 'states' or feelings (ahwāl) of the heart, the knowledge of its defects and also the knowledge of God, His attributes and acts.

Al Ghazali is of ^{the} opinion that temporal and spiritual knowledge are often opposed to each other in the sense that if a man devotes himself to one of them to its uttermost depths, his insight would fall short in respect of the other. Hence we notice that people who are discriminating in the affairs of this world are lacking in the knowledge of the world to come, and on the other hand those who are discriminating in Spiritual knowledge are deficient in a great deal of secular knowledge. The reason is that since the capacity of human intelligence is limited, it is normally not equal to the mastery of both, and great attainment in the one kind of knowledge stands in the way of attainment in the other.

Thus mastery of knowledge both of this world and the world to come is not possible for ordinary people. The prophets, however, are exempt from this limitation, and must be so if they are to fulfil their mission; it requires them to be able to guide and direct people both in the affairs of this world and the world to come, and they are accordingly enabled to attain perfection in both kinds of knowledge through the special support they have from Providence and the strength that

they derive from the Divine Power, which has room for all
(1)
things.

Supernatural Knowledge

Al Ghazali gives the title of "Religious Knowledge" (Al-Ulūm Al Dīniyyah), to the knowledge which derives from the supernatural, and is achieved only through the acceptance of the authority of the prophets. The study of the Quran and the Traditions is the main channel through which it flows. By this knowledge the character of the heart is perfected and its freedom from disease is secured, for Al Ghazali is of opinion that, although the soul has need of natural knowledge, this alone is not sufficient to secure the health of the soul. Furthermore, even the health of the body cannot be maintained by reasoning alone, but requires also the authoritative instruction of the doctor as to the qualities and functions of the various medicines. These cannot be discovered by reason, though the medical instructions cannot be understood without the aid of reason. Thus reason cannot dispense with Revelation nor, on the other hand, can Revelation dispense with reason. He who claims that taqlīd (the mere acceptance of religious authority) is sufficient, and has no regard for reason, is ignorant; equally he who over-emphasizes the

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III p.15³ - 16.

significance of reason, claiming that it suffices for Revelation, is deluded. Al Ghazali believes that there is danger in either view; the safe way is to have regard for both reason and revelation, for each of them has its own indispensable function. He likens rational knowledge to normal food, whereas religious knowledge performs the function of medicine. His point here is that the sick person can be harmed by food in the absence of the necessary medicine. So, too, the diseases of the heart cannot be cured except through the 'prescribed medicines', which have been laid down by religion. Therefore he who does not cure his sick heart by observance of religious rules and practices, but contents himself with rational knowledge, may be harmed, just as the sick man may be harmed by food.⁽¹⁾

It is thus clear that although Al Ghazali sees a certain possibility of opposition between the attainment of natural and supernatural knowledge, Revelation and Reason, he is also at great pains to reconcile the functions of the two. To him the two principles must collaborate in securing the well-being of man. Any attempt to isolate the one from the other would be to ignore the fundamental functions of the two principles, and to this effect Al Ghazali concludes "the claim that rational knowledge is contradictory to religious, and that

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.15

the reconciliation between them is not possible, is a result of blindness in the eye of insight. Indeed, the man who makes such a claim is one of those who would be ready to see contradiction even between religious truths and, for the mere reason that he is unable to reconcile them, think that there is a contradiction in religion itself. Al Ghazali proceeds to liken this attitude to the position of the blind person who, on entering a house, stumbles against utensils and blames others for putting the articles in the wrong place, whereas the objects were indeed in the right place but he could not find the way because of his blindness. It is strange, Al Ghazali thinks, that such a blind man does not attribute his fault to his blindness, instead of attributing it to the shortcomings of others.⁽¹⁾

Spiritual Knowledge

In his theory of knowledge Al Ghazali uses various terms for spiritual knowledge. The most common term however is the 'knowledge of the way to the world to come' ('ilm tariq al ākhirah). This phrase is used to cover the Sufi teaching which is the major influence in forming his views on the aims and methods of education. He classifies this type of knowledge into groups: I. Contemplative; II. Practical.

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III p.15

Contemplative Knowledge

'Ilm al mukāshafah, which we translate 'contemplative knowledge', represents the theoretical aspect of spiritual experience. Al Ghazali sometimes refers to such knowledge as 'the knowledge of the inner Self', ('ilm al-bāṭin). It is the highest form of knowledge that can be attained in this world. Knowledge in this form is characteristic of the saints, 'sincere believers' (siddīqīn) and 'those close to God' (mugarrabīn) and Al Ghazali describes it as "a light that shines in the heart when the heart is sanctified and purified from its blameworthy qualities; through this light many things which the heart previously knew as names, to which it attached obscure or vague meanings, come to be so revealed that the true ma'rifa (knowledge) is secured. This light illuminates such truths as the knowledge of the Deity of God, His eternal and perfect attributes, His acts, His purpose in the creation of this world and the world to come, also the knowledge of the meaning of prophecy, revelation, Satan, the Angels, the conflict between Satan and Man, the appearance of the Angels to the Prophet and the Delivery of the revelation to the Prophet, the knowledge of the realms of heaven and earth, the soul, the conflict between the forces of the Angels and that of the Demons within the soul, the knowledge of the world to come, Heaven, the Fire, the meeting with God, the Vision, the meaning of nearness to God, the presence of God, the meaning

of the happiness of belonging to the heavenly company.⁽¹⁾"

Al Ghazali points out that there are great numbers of people who believe in the principles of these things without any clear understanding of them and that they can be ranked in various degrees of unclearness of understanding; but contemplative knowledge results in such a lifting of the veil as permits the reality of these things to shine out as clearly as do the objects of the material world to the vision of the eye. This knowledge could be attained by human nature were the mirror of the heart not covered over by stains as a result of the lusts of this world.

This illuminating function of spiritual knowledge is thus described by Al Ghazali: "We mean by knowledge of the way of the world to come the knowledge of how to 'polish' this mirror, to remove the 'lust' that acts as a 'veil' from God-Most-High; this purification of the heart is secured by abandoning desires and following completely the example of the Prophet. That part of the heart which has been purified, that part which is clear without any obscurity veiling it from reality, reflects the true nature of things. There is no means to this state except through self-discipline (⁽²⁾riyadah)."

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p.18.27.

(2) Ihya' Vol.I pp. 18 - 19.

This to Al Ghazali's mind is the form of knowledge which is incommunicable by books nor can it be disclosed by him to whom it has been granted except to those who are already familiar with it; and then only in the form of a 'reminder' and in secret. This kind of knowledge is what has been referred to by the Prophet as the 'hidden knowledge' when he said: "Some knowledge is hidden and ^{only} those who know it are (1) the people of the knowledge of God."

It is obvious from the foregoing account of contemplative knowledge that Al Ghazali conceives of it as the 'true knowledge' which is revealed under the shining light of reality, the knowledge which is characterised by clear apprehension and certainty, the Divine light which illuminates all those things that have vague and obscure meanings in our minds, the metaphysical problems which we usually fail to understand or give a true picture of, the idea behind religious principles that we do not fully grasp. All these things and others become clear and plain under this Divine light. Al Ghazali claims, as we have already seen, that this knowledge is not only the highest possible in this world but is also the basis of the highest knowledge in the world to come, namely the 'Vision' of God, which is in fact the final development and

(1) Ihya' Vo.I p.19

the ultimate clarification of the contemplative knowledge attained in this world.

Practical Knowledge

Al Ghazali presents practical knowledge (ilm al-mu'amalah) as the knowledge of the qualities of the heart in both their positive and negative aspects, that is to say, the praiseworthy qualities which 'ought' to be present and on the other hand the blameworthy ones that are to be eliminated. Speaking of the former, Al Ghazali gives instances of some of them as patience, thankfulness, fear of God, hope, contentment, piety, generosity, gratitude, charity, truthfulness and sincerity. He points out that the practical knowledge is achieved through (1) the knowledge of the nature of these qualities, clear understanding of their causes and effects, a knowledge of their symptoms, and (2) of the methods of curing their defects. As to the blameworthy qualities, which are the source of all disobedience, Al Ghazali gives as examples: fear of poverty, spite, envy, deceit, pride, hypocrisy, anger, selfconceit, enmity, hatred, avarice, parsimony, discontent, vanity, dishonesty and brutality. Again the knowledge of the nature of these qualities, their causes and effects, and the means of combating them is an integral part of the knowledge of the world to come. Moreover Al Ghazali maintains that although

the attainment of such knowledge does not form a part of the orthodox scheme of religious obligations it has been shown by "the learned", (his Sufi masters), to constitute a truly obligatory duty. ⁽¹⁾ The emphasis in Al Ghazali's view of this practical 'science' is upon its function in the 'cultivation' of the soul. The contrast between the 'practical' and 'contemplative' which is characteristic of Sufi thought, makes plain the special function of practical knowledge. Its direct aim is the improvement of character. To educate the soul, in Al Ghazali's view, is not a mere exercise of external worship; the latter is important, but less important than the educative process which must go deeper into the inner self, examine the roots of human character, good or bad, and discover the causes and the effects which directly affect human behaviour. Any defect or lack in the praiseworthy qualities, or any inclination to bad qualities or domination by them would present a task for this science. Its goal must be the cure of an unhealthy character or the restoration of a good character that has been lost; in other words purification of the soul. This is the reason why Al Ghazali definitely includes this 'science' in his spiritual discipline. In emphasising the significance of this form of knowledge Al Ghazali points out

(1) Ihyā' Vol.I p.19

that the "qualities" of the heart are the source or power from which all human behaviour springs. To him this causal relation between qualities and actions follows the obvious connection between body and soul, and for this reason also the science of jurisprudence, which is concerned with our external activities, is inferior to the science of the world to come, (1) which is concerned with the purity of the soul.

Prophetic and Scholastic Knowledge

Knowledge is also classified by Al Ghazali according to the means of its attainment: I. That which flashes into the heart without the knower being aware how it has occurred. This is called 'revelation'. II. That which is gained through normal channels of learning: this is called Scholastic knowledge; since it is attained by the kind of study characteristic of scholars. Revelation, Al Ghazali maintains, is itself of two forms: - a) That in which a person is not aware of the way it happens nor of its source. To this Al Ghazali gives the name 'inspiration' (ilham). b) That in which the person is conscious of the source of the knowledge, as when he sees the angel who delivers it. This he names true 'Revelation' (wahy). The first kind of revelation is characteristic of the

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p.18

Saints and the second comes only to the prophets.

The distinction between 'revelation' and 'scholastic' knowledge is here presented as a difference in the means of attaining knowledge. Al Ghazali firmly emphasises that the nature of the truth to be attained through either means is one and the same. He reiterates that the heart is by nature capable of apprehending all forms of truth, and its failure to do so is due only to the obstacles and defects he has described. Nor is there any distinction between revelation and scholastic knowledge in respect of the source or the cause of the knowledge they attain; for the source in both cases is derived from the "Preserved Tablets", and the cause is in both cases the removal of the veil which comes between the soul and the truth. The difference between the two lies in the 'method' or the 'means' of removing the veil. In scholastic learning the veil is removed through natural methods, and knowledge is attained by human effort alone; in revelation the means to attainment is supernatural and human effort to gain knowledge is by itself of little avail. In revelation the means to the removal of the veil is the Providence which causes the 'wind of Grace' to blow; as Al Ghazali describes it: - "The veil between the two mirrors (the heart and the Preserved Tablets) is sometimes removed by 'hand' and sometimes ceases to exist through the blowing of the wind of Grace, ... and thus some

of that which is inscribed on the Preserved Tablets is
(1)
reflected in the heart."

How and when this process of learning by revelation occurs is explained by Al Ghazali thus: - "this happens sometimes in sleep and so the person can foretell what is going to happen in the future: though complete removal of the veil which hangs before the truth comes only in death." He further explains that this veil can be removed, even when the person is awake, through a hidden Grace and then "there shines in the heart from the invisible world something of the wonders of knowledge." Sometimes it comes like a sheet of lightning, sometimes in a succession of flashes but seldom is the illumination prolonged. (2)

Mystical or Sufi learning

Al Ghazali asserts that the Sufi way of approaching reality is to invoke Divine inspiration rather than to practice scholastic reasoning. The Sufis are not advocates of book-learning nor of the examination of logical proofs. They consider rather that the means of discovering the truth, the means of self-education, is discipline, the elimination of blameworthy qualities, detachment from earthly interests, and

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.16.21.

(2) Ihya' Vol.III p.17

setting forth with eagerness towards God. When these disciplines are practised then God will take charge of the servant's heart by enlightening it with the light of knowledge so that His Grace is flooded upon it; when the light shines the secrets of the invisible world are manifested and the Divine realities beam upon the heart. Hence the duty of the servant is to be prepared by complete purity, devotion, sincere will and continuous expectation of the Grace of God. In support of this Sufi theory Al Ghazali points out that the prophets and saints did not arrive at reality through scholastic reasoning but through indifference to this world, detachment from its relationships, freeing the heart from its interests, and diverting attention from family, home, power and position, so that the heart arrives at a state of complete indifference towards temporal and material things. Therefore the learner must confine himself in a private mosque (zāwiyah) and limit his physical worship to the duties and the fixed supererogatory services (rawātib). He must sit with his heart present and concentrated; he should not distract his thoughts by reciting the Qur'an, enquiring into its explanation, nor by studying the books of the Traditions. He must strive not to allow anything to enter his thoughts save God. During this period of solitude the learner must not cease to utter the word God, God, Allah, Allah. He must perform this

continuously with the concentration of the heart until he arrives at a state in which he ceases to utter the word, since he feels that the word is present in his tongue; then he will find his heart continuing the repetition of the word until its form and letters cease to exist and its meaning only persists in the heart as if it were inherent in it.

When the learner, or 'seeker', arrives at this state he has the option of concluding the course of his discipline or further pursuing this course by completely repelling the disturbing evil thoughts (waswās). He should not beseech the Grace of God, for indeed through what he is doing he is deserving of the Grace of God. He must merely wait for that which God may bestow on him as He has done on His prophets and saints. If the learner is sincere in his will, persistent in his devotion, not pulled down by his earthly desires, nor disturbed by any wordly thought whatever, then the light of truth will shine in his heart. (1)

Defects of the Sufi Method

After giving an account of the mystical way of learning Al Ghazali thinks it fair to present the argument which can be brought against it. The scholars who criticise it do not deny

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III pp.16 - 17.

the possibility of carrying out the Sufi practices, nor that they may lead to the desired end; this, they think, is rare but it has happened in the case of most of the prophets and saints. It is objected, however, first that it is not easy to secure the conditions for learning in this way, for the cutting off of all wordly relations to the extent recommended is almost impossible and even if it can be secured at all it is most likely to prove ephemeral, for the heart is easily disturbed by the slightest thought; moreover temperament may deteriorate and consequently the mental balance of the learner may be affected and through this the body itself may become sick. Furthermore this self-discipline and cultivation may fail to carry the student up to the desired truth, but instead some delusive imaginations may take possession of his heart for a long time and even for his life-time. The scholars in their arguments indicate that there were many so-called Sufis who were subject to such delusions, whereas if they had adopted and mastered the method of rational study they would have been able to unmask and banish these delusions. Therefore, continues the scholars' argument, the scholastic method of learning is safer and arrives more quickly at the goal. A further such argument is that the Sufi method encourages the abandonment of study, witness the man who declines to learn Jurisprudence on the grounds that the Prophets did not learn

it, though he became jurisprudent through Revelation or Divine Inspiration. Such a person thinks that self-discipline alone may lead him to a knowledge of Jurisprudence. This, the scholars say, would be like a person who refuses to earn a living through husbandry, hoping that he may find a treasure; to find a treasure in such a way is possible but highly improbable and so is it with the student who hopes to attain knowledge without the labour of methodical study. Finally the opponents of the Sufi method maintain that there is no objection to adopting the mystical methods of self-discipline for further revelation of that which has not been attained by the scholars, but this is no substitute for the effort of scholastic study. Application to that study is an essential preliminary to the other.

Here we see that Al Ghazali states very fairly the scholastic stand-point and shows a considerable understanding of the objections raised by the scholars. He allows their arguments some substance, and in this context he does not engage in refuting them. But does this mean that he is less confident in the Sufi method he himself adopts? The answer is definitely not. He repeatedly asserts that the Sufi method of approaching reality, namely the method of self-discipline is best; moreover he maintains that according to the verdict of the spiritually learned it is an obligatory duty and it is one

which he has followed himself. Certainly it is not easy but this does not affect its validity and its eventual leading to the true knowledge. Al Ghazali on many occasions states that the way to the knowledge of God is not a smooth one and hence the term 'effort' or 'striving' (mujahadah) has been used by him to describe it. God said: "Those who strive for us we shall guide to our ways", and here Al Ghazali interprets this 'striving' as the struggle against the self or the self-discipline which God has made the condition of His guidance.⁽¹⁾

Al Ghazali's failure to refute the other scholastic objections which he quotes requires some explanation. I think that he is not unmindful of the fact that there have been some people who have adopted the Sufi way but have gone astray, and so have undergone mental and physical troubles. For this reason he strongly recommends that the student must have a Sufi teacher (shaykh), in whom he may find guidance, and who will lead him in the straight way; "for the road to God is not an easy one, and the ways to Satan are pleasant and numerous." He also states that "the seeker who has no teacher to guide him will be guided by Satan, just as the man who goes into the wilderness without a guide is courting serious

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p.21.5.

(1)
danger."

The danger that arises from abandoning the scholastic method of learning and adopting the Sufi method is recognised by Al Ghazali to some extent; for this reason he insists, as we shall see later, that obligatory religious instruction must receive priority; he gives spiritual knowledge, or the science of the world to come, superiority to all other types of sciences such as theology, law, medicine and other secular subjects, and fervently claims its predominance over them. Therefore the adoption of the Sufi method of learning is in his view inevitable for those who seek true knowledge.

The Difference between Prophetic and Scholastic Experience

To differentiate between the two forms of knowledge in terms of the method of learning and the experience of the learner, Al Ghazali points out that the prophetic experience, or intuitive knowledge, springs from within the heart through the inner door which leads to the invisible world, whereas scholastic or rational knowledge enters the heart through the natural channels of learning, - that is to say the 'senses',

the faculties which disclose the visible world. This is the difference, according to Al Ghazali, in the ways in which the two forms of knowledge occur in the heart (see Part II), but there is also another difference, namely the difference in the methods whereby the scholars on the one hand and the Sufis on the other direct their efforts towards knowledge. The scholars direct their efforts to the attainment of knowledge itself whereas the Sufis apply theirs to the task of purifying and polishing the heart, in certainty that when the heart is purified knowledge will flow from it spontaneously. In illustration of this Al Ghazali narrates the following story: -

Some of the Romans and Chinese challenged each other in front of a king to a contest of skill in the art of painting. The king decided to give them a "panel" (⁽¹⁾suffah) and required each party to paint on one side of it. A curtain was placed between them so that neither party could see the

(1) This is the word Al Ghazali has used in the text. It is impossible to determine exactly what he had in mind; but "panel" seems the safest equivalent as expressing what would have served his purpose. The dictionary equivalents of "suffah" are "shelf" and "ledge", which are clearly unsuitable. A possible alternative would be "portico", but this, too, hardly fits the picture Al Ghazali is trying to convey.

work of the other. Now the Romans came and brought with them a good collection of marvellous colours, but the Chinese brought with them not a single colour, but set to work merely polishing their side.

When the Romans finished the Chinese announced that they also had finished. The king was surprised to hear that the Chinese had finished seeing that they had come without any colours. When they were asked about this, they said: "Pay no heed to colours, remove the curtain." When the curtain was removed their side was shining with the beauty of the Roman painting. It was even more beautiful because of its purity, just like a polished mirror. In like manner Al Ghazali maintains that the concern of the Sufis is to purify and polish the heart until the light of reality shines in it; just like the act of the Chinese in directing their effort to the polishing of the suffah. On the other hand the effort of the scholars and philosophers is directed to the attainment of knowledge itself through its natural means just as the Roman effort was directed to painting by means of colours. ⁽¹⁾

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.19.27.

PART IV

MORAL EDUCATION

Nature of Character

Al Ghazali criticizes the usual accounts of what is meant by the phrase Husn al khulq "goodness of character", on the ground that they tend to define "goodness of character" in terms of its main consequences, and fail to examine what character is. Each scholar defines goodness of character in relation to the presuppositions of his own branch of study, neglecting to ask what is the nature of character itself. The legal thinker relates goodness of character to legal conceptions; the theologian to theological conceptions. Thus such thinkers in Al Ghazali's view are one-sided in their conceptions of character. Al Ghazali then sets out to say what he himself means by character starting with a distinction between khulq (the inner qualities) and khalq (the outward appearance). When people speak of a man being of good khulq, they mean his inward form (al sūrah al bātinah); when they speak of khalq this refers to his outward form (al sūrah al zahirah). This is the popular distinction between the two terms.

Now Al Ghazali regards khulq as that "inward" (hay'ah) which is firmly established in the soul, and from which actions arise spontaneously and without deliberation (rawiyyah). The state in which actions springing from khulq are determined by

reason and religion is called "good character"; but for good character there must be a stable disposition to perform such actions. The state in which such actions are not approved by reason and religion is called "bad character". If the internal form is such as only sometimes yields good actions, we do not speak of "good character". A person who performs the acts of generosity only infrequently and from ulterior motives cannot be described as having the trait of generosity; the internal form of generosity is not firmly established in him. The same is true of a man in whom good action does not arise spontaneously, but with a deliberate effort. The man who makes a deliberate effort to be generous has not the trait of generosity. Al Ghazali here introduces an argument similar to that of Aristotle, in order to prove that character is a disposition, or an established state (hay'at al nafs).

Aristotle puts his argument as follows: Since the things that come to be in the mind are of three kinds, emotions, faculties, and disposition^s, virtue must necessarily belong to one of the three classes. By emotions, Aristotle means feelings such as anger, fear, envy; by faculties, he means that in virtue of which we are said to be capable of these feelings; and by a disposition, that in virtue of which we are in a certain relation, good or bad, to the feeling. If, for instance, on an occasion of being angry, we are either too violent or too slack

in our anger, we are in a bad relation to the emotion; if our anger proceeds in a happy medium, our relation to the emotion is a good one.

1) - Emotions are in themselves neither virtues nor vices, for by reason of the emotions we are not denominated either good or bad; but by reason of virtues and vices we are. By reason of emotions we are neither ^{to be} praised nor blamed, but by reason of virtues and vices we are. In both anger and fear we feel without choice, whereas the virtues are acts of choice, or at least certainly not independent of it.

2) - For the same reason, emotions are not faculties, for we are not called good or bad, nor are we praised or blamed, merely because we are able to feel. Moreover, we have faculties by nature, but we do not come to be good or bad by nature.

3) - Since then the virtues are neither emotions nor faculties, it remains that they must be dispositions. ⁽¹⁾ (The Ethics, pp. 45 - 46).

In Al Ghazali, the term "character" represents what Aristotle deals with under what he calls "virtues and vices".

(1) The Ethics pp. 45 - 46.

Aristotle proceeds by considering the three states that have some connection with virtues and vices, and by elimination reaches his conclusion that they are dispositions of the soul. Al Ghazali proceeds similarly to consider four possible alternatives for what could be held to constitute character. These are (1) the actual practice of good or evil; (2) the capacity (qudrah) to perform a good or evil act; (3) the knowledge (ma'rifah) of what is good and what is bad; (4) the disposition (hay'at al nafs) through which man becomes inclined to perform either good or evil acts and through which the act of either good or evil becomes more pleasant than the other.

(1) Now character is not the actual performance of good or evil, for a man may possess the character of generosity, but for some reason or other may not be able to practice it, as when a man who has nothing to give, but would give if he had. Similarly a man who has the character of meanⁿess and who is unwilling to give, may sometimes give because of an ulterior motive.

(2) Character is not the capacity to perform good or evil acts, for such capacity is related equally to both good and bad. Moreover, all men possess by nature the capacity to do either good or evil; hence this capacity cannot form the distinction between good and bad character.

(3) Character is not just having knowledge of what is good or bad, for such knowledge is related equally to good and bad. Men may know what is good without doing it.

(4) It remains, therefore, that character is the disposition of the soul, whereby man performs good or bad acts.

Aristotle and Al Ghazali thus agree that character does not consist in a faculty or capacity for doing good or bad; also that character is a disposition of the soul. Al Ghazali however, does not discuss "emotions" nor does Aristotle discuss character either as the knowledge of good and bad or as the actual performance of what is good or evil.

Intellectual and Moral Virtues.

Absolute beauty of the outward form is secured only when there is goodness in all its parts in relation to one another. The same is true of the inward form. There are four principal parts (arkān) in the soul. For character to be good, there must be a proper balance among these parts. Good character, therefore, is the harmony that this proper balance brings about. These parts or elements, according to Al Ghazali, are the faculties of anger, appetite, knowledge, and justice. This last he calls quwwat al 'adl and introduces as a faculty along with

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p. 46³ - 47

the other three. In Al Ghazali's thought, there is a faculty of justice, and it is the domination of justice over the elements of the human soul that produces goodness of character. (1)

Intellectual Virtues.

The distinction between intellectual and moral virtues in Al Ghazali does not take explicit form. He speaks of a faculty of knowledge (quwwat al 'ilm), whereby man can judge and distinguish between true and false beliefs and statements, and between good and bad acts. It is only as this power of knowledge exercises itself, that man achieves wisdom, and this is the foundation of all good qualities of character. It is through the power of knowledge, when it exists in the souls that many intellectual virtues such as practical wisdom (al siyāṣah), intelligence, quickness of perception, shrewdness of opinion, are generated. Excess in the faculty of knowledge generates the qualities of cunning, deceit and so forth; while a defect in it generates qualities such as idiocy, stupidity and insanity. The mean between these two extremes is wisdom, which is praised in the Quran. (2)

The foregoing outline is all that Al Ghazali says about what Aristotle conceives as "intellectual virtues". Al Ghazali,

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III p.47

(2) Ihyā' Vol.III p.47

however, in his analysis, includes wisdom in the list of his Cardinal Virtues without any implication of its being "intellectual" in the sense in which Aristotle contrasts (1) "intellectual" with "moral". On this point, Al Ghazali seems to be more influenced by the Platonic notion of the Cardinal Virtues. But his mode of dividing the human soul and his attempt to include what he calls the "power of justice" as a fourth faculty that results from Reason exercising itself seems, however, to be an innovation; though it is one which apparently involves some inconsistency, as we shall see.

Moral Virtues.

Moral Virtues are conceived by Aristotle to be the outcome of Reason controlling the irrational parts of the soul, for in the man who controls appetites and in him who resolves to do so but fails, we praise the Reason or rational part of the soul, because it exhorts aright and to the best course. Clearly there is, beside Reason, some other irrational principle which opposes and withstands Reason. In the man of self-control it obeys Reason and perhaps in the man of perfected self-mastery it is yet more obedient, for then it agrees entirely with Reason. The irrational is twofold; the one part, (the vegetable) has no share in reason, but the second part, desire or

(1) The Ethics p. 35

appetition, generally does partake of it in a sense, insofar as it is obedient to reason and capable of submitting to its rule.
(1)

In accordance with the division of the soul into the rational and irrational, Aristotle considers the excellence of man to be of two kinds. We recognise two classes of excellence, calling the one Intellectual and the other Moral; pure science, intelligence and practical wisdom are intellectual; liberality and self-mastery are moral. In speaking of a man's moral character, we do not say he is scientific or intelligent, but a good man. We praise the man of science by reason of his intellectual qualities and these, as far as they are praise-
(2)
worthy, we call excellences.

In Al Ghazali, however, we do not find this classification. His thought goes only so far as to define the four Faculties, out of which the four Cardinal Virtues arise. Al Ghazali's account of intellectual virtues has already been discussed; it remains to consider his analysis of what Aristotle calls moral virtues. The analysis of the human soul which Al Ghazali adopts in his scheme of moral education differs considerably from the conception manifested in his more general theory of

(1) The Ethics pp. 32 - 35.

(2) The Ethics p. 35.

human nature. In his scheme of moral education what he calls the "faculty of justice" (quwwat al 'adl) appears as a new element in the soul. This conception, however, does not appear in his general analysis of human nature; there, he does not distinguish between the function of this power and that of the power of knowledge (Reason). The function of Reason there is to keep in balance the irrational faculties of appetite and anger. The absence of this balance is due to the part played by ^{the} demonic element. It manifests itself in the failure of Reason to control anger and appetite. Contrasted with this is a fourth faculty quwwat al 'adl, which comes into play when there is balance among the parts of the soul, when, that is, Reason successfully exercises control over the passions and desires. An analogy is given here to distinguish between the power of qilm (Reason) and the power of 'adl. The former is pictured as a wise commander (al mushir al nāsih), the commander who gives reasonable orders, while the latter as that which carries out the commands of Reason. Anger and appetite are pictured as the subjects upon which these commands are imposed. The moral virtues, therefore, are the outcome of the power of 'adl exercising itself in carrying out the commands of Reason. Thus the good state of anger and the good state of appetite are the outcome of the control demanded by Reason and carried out by the power of 'adl. It is right to note that Al Ghazali seems

not to distinguish between Plato's concept of Justice and Aristotle's. He sometimes speaks of it in terms of the mean, the happy medium that produces our virtues; and here he clearly deviates from the meaning that Aristotle attaches to the word justice. Again he speaks of it as "justice" in the soul, which is a sign of the soul's health. This seems Platonic rather than Aristotelian, though Plato's social interpretation of justice gives place to Al Ghazali's more individualistic tendency.

Like Aristotle, Al Ghazali speaks of the good state of the power of anger and appetite, that is, the mean, as constituting our moral virtues. Hence the idea of the Aristot^elian mean plays an important role in shaping Al Ghazali's thought regarding the education of character. The good state of the power of anger, Al Ghazali says, is called courage, the good state of the power of appetite is called temperance ('iffah). Hence courage is a mean state between excess and defect in the faculty of anger. When the faculty of anger deviates from this mean, and rises to excess, it is called rashness; when it diminishes to the point of defect, it is called cowardice. If control over appetite is lost and it rises to excess, this is called gluttony (intemperance); if it falls to the degree of deficiency, it is called apathy. The virtue of the faculty lies in the mean, which is praiseworthy, and the vice of it lies

in the two extremes, which are blameworthy. The power of justice, according to Al Ghazali, has neither excess nor defect, for a man must be either just or unjust. ⁽¹⁾ In this connection, Al Ghazali conceives of justice ('adl) as the mean in other faculties. At other times he speaks of it as a separate^a virtue; and here he differs from the wider conception of Aristotle. It is, however, safe to assume that the political and the social conception of justice which played a great part in directing the thought of Aristotle did not strongly influence Al Ghazali, and this explains why he says so little about what he sometimes calls the "power of justice" (qūwwat al-'adl) and sometimes "justice" ('adl). Al Ghazali is undoubtedly inconsistent in his definitions of this virtue. He first considers the faculty of justice as one of the principal parts (arkan) of the soul. His context here suggests that it is not an independent faculty, since it operates only through the operation of Reason in controlling passions and desires. ⁽²⁾ He identifies its function as being the carrying out of the commands (isharah) of Reason. This is all that he says about the faculty of justice (qūwwah al-'adl). On the other hand, when he speaks of the Cardinal Virtues which are produced

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p. 47 - 48.

(2) Ihya' Vol.III p. 47.

through achieving the mean in the faculties of knowledge, anger, and appetite, he lists 'adl (justice) as one of the virtues. One would suppose that this virtue of justice would be conceived as springing from the faculty of justice, but Al Ghazali is not precise on this point. In an attempt to define 'adl "justice", which he conceives as one of the four Cardinal Virtues, he says: "We mean by 'adl a state (hal) of the soul, a power (quwwah) through which man controls anger and appetite, and rules them according to the requirements of wisdom". Thus the definition, as it reads, tends to identify 'adl so conceived with quwwat al-'ilm or Reason, which yields the virtue of wisdom, and of which he gave a similar definition in his discussion on the elements of human nature. (see part I..

But Reason here has a different sense from that given it in the general analysis of human nature. It is a state of the soul through which man is capable of judging what is right and what is wrong. Now, does the making of distinction between right and wrong, which is the function of Reason, differ from the controlling of passions and desires according to the requirements of wisdom, which is the function of justice ('adl)? Al Ghazali is not clear about this. I would think that the distinction he implies is that the function of reason is to shed light and give a sound judgment, while the function of 'adl (the power of justice) is to act accordingly. His

analogy of the "wise commander", (Reason), and the "executive body", (gūwwat al-'adl), may support this argument.

It still remains to be considered whether the faculty of justice is held by Al Ghazali to be an element of the human soul. Clearly his words: "there are four arkan (main parts) ⁽¹⁾ in the inner self" supports the impression that it is. But again his explanation of the function of the power of justice among these faculties suggests that this power is merely a phase of balance, and one which constitutes a mean state in human nature. This interpretation may be supported by his leaving this power out of account in his discussion of the elements in the human soul (see part 1). Moreover, he repeatedly uses the expression 'adl "justice", as equivalent ⁽²⁾ to the i'tidal "mean state".

Thus it becomes increasingly clear that Al Ghazali's conception of justice in human nature is confused, inasmuch as he identifies Justice in the Platonic sense with the Aristotelian "mean", which constitutes goodness of character.

Causes of Goodness of Character.

Al Ghazali propounds two ways in which goodness of character comes about; but the first of these is a complex of

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III p. 47

(2) Ihyā' Vol.III p. 50, 17.

two distinct conceptions, probably due to the close similarity of the two Arabic words, fitrah and tab'. The usual meaning of the former is "natural disposition"; of the latter, "acquired disposition"; in certain contexts, the two are interchangeable; but in studying the first of Al Ghazali's two causes of good character, the distinction must be borne in mind. In the case of fitrah goodness of character can come through the Divine Grace. Then the person is born with a perfect reason, balanced appetite, and moderate anger. He is virtuous without external aid and educated without instruction. The prophets are examples of this. Linked with this in Al Ghazali's first cause is the case of tab'. Here, again without effort on his own part, the child's character may become good either by up-bringing or by the "customs" in which he grows up.

Al Ghazali's second cause of goodness of character is self-discipline. Here, like Aristotle, he propounds the doctrine that goodness of character can be achieved by training and practice. Thus if a man wishes to acquire the virtue of liberality, his way lies in practising the art of giving lavishly of his wealth and exerting himself in this until it becomes part of his nature. So with other virtues, it is similarly by training that vice can be cured, or even
(1)
turned into good habits. All qualities of character that

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p. 50

are approved by Religion come about by means of habit formation.

Formation of Habits and the Doctrine of Pleasure and Pain.

The pleasure we experience when we perform moral or religious acts is the test whereby we judge the strength of our virtues of character. Hence the liberal man is he who finds pleasure in the acts of giving, the humble is he who finds pleasure in humility. Here Al Ghazali speaks of what he calls al-akhlaq al-diniyyah which may be translated "the characteristics of a religious man". These according to him cannot be firmly rooted in a man, unless he becomes so accustomed to good actions as to find pleasure in them, and becomes so habituated as to find it painful to do the opposite. We must interpret the pleasure and pain that supervene upon our actions as symptoms of our condition. The man who abstains from bodily pleasures, and actually enjoys doing so, is virtuous, while the man who does so but dislikes it, is not. It is pleasure that makes us do what is bad and pain that makes us decline what is good or right. For this reason, we have to discipline ourselves to feel the pleasure at doing right and pain at doing wrong. To emphasize this, Al Ghazali quotes the Quranic verse, where God, referring to prayer, says: "it is difficult except to those who are pious."⁽¹⁾

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p. 50

It is a sign of our being vicious if we feel pain in doing good actions, or in omitting bad ones. A person in such a state cannot attain moral happiness. He should however, continue doing the right and omitting the wrong, even if he feels pain in doing so. Such a person is better than the person who omits doing the good acts completely, or one who feels pleasure in doing bad actions. He is, however, less virtuous than the person who does good actions willingly and with pleasure. The latter is the man who enjoys moral happiness. (1) To attain happiness through virtue it is not sufficient that a man occasionally feels pleasure at doing good; he must feel such pleasure continually throughout his life. A man who performs the acts of liberality must unfailingly find pleasure in such acts, if he is to be happy through his virtue. The longer a man practises virtuous acts the more firmly established the virtue becomes. This is the view that the prophet expressed in replying to a question about happiness: (2) "It is length of life in obedience to God."

Al Ghazali here introduces an explanation of the dislike for death shown by the Prophets and the Saints. His argument runs as follows: "the longer the life spent in practising good

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p. 50

(2) Ihya' Vol.III p. 51

actions, the more perfect and firmly established becomes virtue, and the more firmly established is virtue, the happier man is". The purpose of religious acts, Al Ghazali continues, is to leave a good effect on the heart. This can be assured only through prolonged practice in the good acts. Moral and religious education must be directed to eliminating love of this world from the soul and implanting in it the love of God. Meeting Him should be its greatest delight.

It is quite usual for virtuous acts to become pleasant through habit formation, for habits have great influence upon our souls, even greater than that required in the formation of virtues. Here are some examples given by Al Ghazali to prove the far-reaching influence of habit on our lives.

I) - The gambler rejoices and finds much pleasure in his gambling. He even disparages all sorts of pleasures other than his own. Though gambling deprives him of his money and brings his life into ruin, yet he adheres to it because of the influence of habit upon him.

II) - Some people have the habit of watching birds and observing their flight and behaviour. We see such persons standing under the heat of the sun, probably all day long, paying no attention except to the birds in which they are interested. This is because of the habit which they have developed and consequently the pleasure that they feel in following it.

III) - The criminal may pride himself on the punishment which is inflicted on him. He endures all sorts of suffering, even to the sentence of death, rather than admit his guilt. This is because of the pleasure he finds in what, as he thinks, is an act of courage and manliness. Though his acts are wicked and contemptible, yet he finds pleasure in them, because of the habit of vicious action that persists in him. These illustrations explain, according to Al Ghazali, how greatly our actions are governed by the habits we form. He concludes that since, through the formation of bad habits, the soul can be led into the way of enjoying vice, it can similarly be trained to delight in virtue by being disciplined in the constant performance of what is right. Moreover, the inclination of the soul to vice is unnatural. It resembles the inclination of appetite to unnatural food. The inclination to wisdom, to the love and worship of God, is natural to the soul. It resembles the inclination of appetite for good food, which is natural to the body. But the tendency of the soul to (1) bodily pleasures is unnatural and unbecoming.

The Test of Habit Formation.

Both Al Ghazali and Aristotle emphasize the fact that the pleasures which follow from our actions must be taken as a

(1) Inhyā' Vol.III p. 51

sign of our moral state. He who is truly brave is he who stands up against danger either with pleasure, or at least without pain, while he who does it with pain is not truly

(1) brave. The liberal man, according to Al Ghazali, is he who finds pleasure in giving, whereas he who gives with reluctance cannot be described as liberal. The humble man is he who finds

(2) pleasure in humility. Al Ghazali, however, does not, like Aristotle, give a systematic account of pleasure and pain as being the criteria of moral virtues. In propounding this Aristotle says "because by reason of pleasures we do what is bad and by reason of pain we decline from doing what is right". This idea is however, expressed in Al Ghazali by his analogies of the gambler who does what is wrong because of the pleasure he finds in doing so and the person who performs the acts of worship reluctantly owing to lack of pleasure in them.

Both Al Ghazali and Aristotle see difficulties in the doctrine that "by doing acts of virtue we become virtuous". This, says Aristotle, "implies that man must do just actions in order to become just. A person may be perplexed as to the meaning of this statement, for if men are doing the actions, they have the respective virtues already, just as men are

(1) The Ethics pp. 40 - 41.

(2) Thyā Vol.III p. 50.

grammarians or musicians when they do the acts of these arts." (1)

In an attempt to remove this perplexity Al Ghazali says this is one of the wonders of the relation between the soul and the body. For the feeling that prevails in the heart expresses itself in actions by the members to the extent that these members act in accordance with those feelings. On the other hand, every act that is performed by members may leave an effect on the soul, and so on in a "vicious circle". Al Ghazali gives an example to make this clear. A man who wishes to make good handwriting a habit of his soul so that he becomes a good writer by disposition (tab), must practise imitating what a good writer does. He must do this repeatedly and for a long time. The action is done at first with effort and trouble (takalluf). In the course of time, with repetition and with the full development of that habit, goodness of writing comes to be a quality of the soul. Good writing, which was at first an action that came reluctantly and painfully, at last flows easily and readily from his hand.

In this way Al Ghazali explains how the activities that proceed from a "formed habit" differ from those which have gone to form it. He draws a distinction between two ways of performing good actions. The good act through which we learn

(1) The Ethics p. 43.

to be good is a reluctant act, an act which is performed only by our members. There is no activity of the soul in it and consequently we find no pleasure in it. But in the course of time, and after a continuous repetition of the 'good act', we become good in the sense that we have developed the habit or the disposition of goodness; such a habit becomes second nature to us and we no longer perform the good act reluctantly or painfully, but easily and pleasantly. Goodness has come to be a quality of the soul and not merely an act which proceeds from the member. Hence we find pleasure in doing it. Now Aristotle's explanation of the difficulty is different from that given by Al Ghazali. According to Aristotle it does not necessarily follow that if men do virtuous actions they already have the appropriate virtues. It is not so even in the case of arts, for a man may produce something grammatical, either by chance or through suggestion from another; he becomes a grammarian when he not only produces something grammatical, but does so as a grammarian, that is, in virtue of the grammatical knowledge he himself possesses. Here Aristotle distinguishes between the arts and the virtues. There is no direct parallel, indeed the factors do not operate in the same plane, because things which are produced by the arts have their excellence in themselves, and it is sufficient that they should be of a certain kind. But the products of

virtue, say, justice or self-mastery, are not what they are merely because they are acts of a certain kind, but in virtue of the state of the person who performs them. It depends on whether he performs the act knowingly and performs it intentionally with a view to achieving the end of the action for its own sake, and, finally, whether he is himself stable and consistent. These conditions are not necessary for the attainment of success in the arts. For these, the only necessary condition is knowledge. For the attainment of virtue knowledge avails little or not at all; but other conditions are all important. Virtuous action is the result of continued practice rightly performed, that is, from habit after the manner of the just man, or the man of perfect self-mastery. Mere performance of these acts otherwise than according to the example of just and self-controlled men does not result in the possession of virtue. Finally, he who does not perform acts of virtue at all is not even on the way to becoming a good man.⁽¹⁾

Possibility of Modifying Character.

Throughout his moral teaching Al Ghazali emphasises the idea of modifying character through the regulation of passions and desires. According to him, spiritual discipline depends

(1) The Ethics pp. 43 - 45

solely on this regulation, or 'modification'. He points out that some people tend to deny the possibility of such modification, adding that the view of such people is based on the assumption that human nature cannot be changed in any respect. Their argument is twofold:

a) - Character (khulq) is the internal form of man and (khalq) is his external form. Since the external form cannot be changed, the tall man cannot be turned into a short one, nor the ugly man into ^abeautiful, so too internal ugliness of character cannot be turned into 'beauty'.

b) - Goodness of character is alleged to result from the repression (as they call it) of desires and passions; but experience has shown that goodness of character is the outcome of human temperament (mazāij). Any attempt to control this will yield no result; for the purpose of character modification is to check the natural inclination of human nature, and this, the argument continues, is quite impossible.

These two arguments seem to Al Ghazali extremely weak. The claim that character cannot be modified is the claim of him who finds indulgence too pleasant and discipline too hard. Instead of attributing this to his own weakness, such a person maintains that the modification of character is not possible. Al Ghazali makes two further points in refutation of these arguments:

(1) Had not character been susceptible to modification, there would be no use in the instructions and the teaching of the prophets.

(2) Character modification is possible even in animals. We see, for example, that the character of the falcon can be modified and changed from fierceness to tameness, the dog from greed for food to abstemiousness, the horse from intractability to obedience. This gives strong grounds for believing that modification of character is possible in human beings also. The false argument that character cannot be changed for the reason that passions and desires cannot by any means cease to exist is based on the assumption that the aim of discipline is the eradication of the natural inclinations in man. This is an erroneous notion because desires are created in man to serve an essential purpose. If the desire for food ceases, for instance, man will vanish. If the desire for sex disappears the preservation of the race will not be possible. And so with passions: if anger did not exist man would not be able to defend himself against destructive elements. (1)

How People Differ in Capacity for Moral Education.

Al Ghazali is greatly impressed by the Aristotelian notion of moral virtues. According to Aristotle, none of the moral virtues exists in us entirely by nature, for none of the

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III p. 48 - 49. See also Part I p.40

things which exist by nature can be changed by custom. Here Aristotle uses the analogy of a stone. By nature it gravitates downward, and can never by custom be brought to rise upwards. Similarly, fire could never be trained to move downwards. Virtues, then, occur in us neither by nature nor in despite of nature. We are by nature provided with a capacity for (1) receiving them; they are perfected in us through custom.

Al Ghazali has a similar conception, but employs different analogies. He sees all things are divided into those which are created perfect and those which are created imperfect. The first, those which are created complete or perfect (kāmil) by nature, cannot be changed by the will of man. Such are the sky and the stars, and also the bodies of men and animals. This to my mind is an elaboration of Aristotle's notion that we cannot modify ourselves in respect of what we are by nature.

The second category is of those which are created incomplete (nāgis), but provided with the capacity for (2) perfection and improvement under certain conditions. Here, too, it is clear that Al Ghazali is interpreting the Aristotelian idea that we are furnished by nature not with virtues, but with a capacity for receiving virtues. The "certain conditions"

(1) The Ethics pp. 36 - 37.

(2) Ihya' Vol.III p. 48.29.

which Al Ghazali has mentioned and goes on to explain here more fully, are probably the development of what Aristotle means by the term custom. According to Al Ghazali, education is capable of improving our character only within certain limits, and he uses a metaphor to make this clear. "The date kernel is in fact neither a date palm, nor an apple tree, but under 'certain conditions' is capable of becoming a date palm, but it cannot by any means become an apple tree". So, too, our desires and passions can be changed by education, within certain limits, to produce virtue, but education can by no means eradicate these natural inclinations. The responsiveness of individuals to moral influences differs according to Al Ghazali in two principal ways. In the first place, people vary in the intensity of their instincts, and within an individual the natural inclinations vary in intensity. For example, appetite is always more intense and harder to fight against than anger.

Secondly, responsiveness to moral influences depends upon environmental conditions. Al Ghazali divides people into four classes, according to the effect of such conditions upon them.

(1) First comes the naive person (al insān al ghūfl) who does not distinguish between right and wrong, nor between good and evil. He remains without convictions; but the power of

his appetites has not been strengthened by indulgence. Such a person is the most amenable to education, for he only requires a teacher to guide him towards discipline and a stimulus to induce him to adopt it. He has the capacity to become good in a comparatively short time.

(ii) Next comes the person who distinguishes between good and evil, but has not the habit of acting well. His bad behaviour comes of indulging his desires and paying no attention to his knowledge of their evils. Such a person is less responsive to moral education than one of the first class, since he needs to make a double effort, first, to eliminate the bad habits that ~~is~~^{are} in him and then to implant virtuous habits within himself. Resolution is necessary here if the person is to be capable of improvement.

(iii) Thirdly, there is the person who performs vicious acts not only because of the enticement of desires, but because, owing to the wrong education he has received, he does not hesitate to do things that he knows to be evil. The possibility of such a person's responding to education is remote and his reform can hardly be expected because of the many errors that have gone to shape his bad character.

(iv) Fourthly, there is the person who not only adheres to wrong beliefs in which he has been educated and believes that vicious acts are virtuous, but actually prides himself on

performing such acts and thinks that his prestige is thereby enhanced; such a person is the most difficult and unresponsive of all to moral teaching.

4 The person in the first group is described by Al Ghazali as ignorant (jāhil), in the second as "going astray" (dāl), in the third as wicked (fāsiq), and in the fourth as evil-natured (shirrīr)⁽¹⁾.

Methods of Modifying Character.

Al Ghazali regards balance (i'tidāl) in character as the "health of the soul"; any deviation from this "balance" is a sign of indisposition, just as a balance in the constitution of the body is a sign of health. Any deviation from the balance is a sign of ill-health. Thus, there is a correspondence between the tending of the body and the tending of the soul. The cure of the soul by eliminating vices and implanting virtues to strengthen it is like the cure of the body from disease by eliminating the malady and producing health. In physical health the general rule is that the human constitution is by nature balanced, but external conditions can bring about ill-health in the body. So it is also with the soul. For the most part every child is born with a balanced nature, but through habituation and mis-education he develops vices. The body is created at birth incomplete, but

(1) Iḥyā' Vol.III pp. 48 - 49.

matures and grows stronger through being tended and nourished. The soul, too, is created imperfect but with the capacity for being perfected through education. The duty of a doctor is both to devise rules to preserve the health that a man's body already has and to restore to health a body which is suffering from disease. In the same way every being possessed of a soul has the duty, first of preserving the soul's original purity and increasing its strength, and secondly of purifying it when it becomes impure. The diseases which affect the body are usually cured by their opposites. For example, if the patient has a fever, he will be given a cooling treatment. Similarly vices which are the maladies of the soul are cured by their opposites. Thus the disease of ignorance is cured by knowledge, the disease of illiberality by exerting generosity, the disease of vanity by exerting humility. The cure of physical disease requires the sufferer to be patient and endure the unpleasantness of treatment. Similarly, in order to overcome a moral indisposition a person must be patient in bearing the hardship of discipline. It is necessary for the cure of the body that the doctor should know not only the right medicine and treatment and the correct quantity of the medicine to be taken, but also the resistance of the patient. Diseases may be made worse if these are not correctly estimated; similarly in the cure of the soul, the

measures by which its defects are to be cured must be thoroughly examined. Before commencing treatment the doctor should know not only the nature of the disease, its symptoms and its usual course, but should know also the history of the patient including his physical history, profession and age. In like manner the spiritual physician (al shaykh) who guides his followers and cures their souls, should not be hasty in prescribing discipline for them, he should not impose a hard regime upon them, nor should he force them to practise a particular study before he knows the nature of their diseases. As it is likely that the doctor who prescribes the same treatment for all patients may cause harm and even death to many of them, so also the spiritual physician who advises all his followers to pursue the same course of discipline may cause spiritual deterioration in many of them. He must, therefore, consider the moral disease of each individual separately, he must study the various factors such as his age, his constitution, his physical endurance and the severity of treatment he can bear. He will then devise the appropriate treatment. If the pupil is a beginner, with no knowledge of the fundamental religious duties, the shaykh must give him first some instruction in these duties, such as the rules of physical purification and prayer. If he is already engaged in wrong practices, he must first be ordered to abandon them. When the pupil already observes

religious practices and physical purification, then the duty of the shaykh is to consider his inward purity, to study his character, and diagnose the disease of his heart.

There is an important method of modifying character, which must be employed when the disease of a person is so obstinate that he cannot practice its opposite. It is then advisable that such a person should be deflected from his obdurate fault to another one, which is less serious than the first. The case here is like that of the person who is seeking "physical purification": he washes off a blood stain which is impure (najis), with urine, which is also impure, and afterwards he washes off the urine with water, which is the natural thing for removing impurities (najāsah). This course is followed when it is not possible to clean off the blood directly with water. An example of the transformation of character through deflecting interest from one imperfection to something less imperfect, is found by Al Ghazali in the way we can make use of a child's natural interests at various stages of development. The child's interest in play can be used in encouraging him to go to school, or can be transformed into an interest in ornament, and from this to an interest in leadership; the interest in leadership can be transformed into interest in the world to come. Again, the person who is fond of power and position can be deflected to fondness for a less

harmful kind of power. Many characteristics can be modified in this way. In concluding his discussion on modify^{ing} character Al Ghazali states that the general principle for achieving modification of a particular characteristic is to practise the opposite. The person must exert himself to do what is contrary to his desires until his character is improved. The most important thing in self-discipline is a strong will. Once this will is attained, the way is paved for the improvement of character.
(1)

Signs of Moral Diseases.

The analogy of the body is also employed in explaining the symptoms of the diseases of the human heart. Every organ or member of the body has its own proper function and any failure to perform this, is a sign of disease in it. The function of the eye is to see and failure to do this is a symptom of disease in the eye. So, too, the proper function of the soul is to attain knowledge and wisdom. Attaining wisdom leads to knowing God, knowing God leads to loving Him, loving Him leads to worshipping Him, worshipping Him leads to finding pleasure in the thought of Him, finding pleasure in the thought of Him leads to preferring such pleasure to all other forms of pleasure. Al Ghazali strengthens his argument by observing - as a matter

(1) Ihya' Vol.III pp. 52ⁿ - 54.

of common acceptance - that the distinctive characteristic of the human heart is ability to know things as they are. Thus knowledge of things as they are must imply, first, knowing God, for He is the creator of these things. If man knows all things, but does not know God, his knowledge is worth nothing, he would be as if he knew nothing. If it is established that knowing God is the best of all forms of knowledge, then it follows that loving Him is the best of all forms of love, for loving Him is the result of knowing Him closely. Again if it is established that loving Him is the best of all forms of love, it follows that preferring Him to all worldly interests is the best of all aims, for the sign of love is to prefer the beloved to all other things. The conclusion is that the knowledge of things as they are, which is the distinctive characteristic of man, entails preferring God to all other things. This is the sign of health in the human heart. Therefore, a man who prefers anything to knowledge of Him, is sick in heart, just as the stomach, which prefers anything other than its proper food, is sick. Hence the inclination of the soul to momentary pleasures is deemed by Al Ghazali to be the symptom of moral disease. According to him, almost all souls are sick, except those which receive salvation from God. Some physical disease can escape detection; a man may be suffering from disease without being aware of it. Moral diseases are of this kind, and hence man usually pays no attention

to them. If it happens that a man becomes aware of his moral diseases, he still finds it hard to endure the bitterness of treatment, because the cure of moral diseases lies in the opposition to desires, which are extremely hard to fight. If a person can endure the unpleasantness of the treatment, there is still the difficulty of finding a skilful physician who can undertake the task of treatment. The learned (ʿulamā) who are supposed to be the spiritual physicians, are also affected by the same diseases; and a sick doctor cannot cure the sick. This, according to Al Ghazali, is the reason why the diseases of the heart are obstinate. This is the reason, he considers, for the degeneration in understanding of moral questions that has taken place. The "ʿulamā" have come to deny that modification of character is possible, because they are too interested in this world to pay attention to it. They rather occupy themselves in what are ostensibly acts of worship, but are in truth hypocrisy. These are the symptoms of moral diseases, as Al Ghazali expounds them. ⁽¹⁾

The Mean as a Sign of Moral Health.

The mean in Al Ghazali's theory is the sign of moral health. This is obvious when we consider the treatment of a malady of the soul. A person who sets out to cure the disease of illiberality by giving money must observe the mean, and if

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III p. 54.

he goes beyond it, he will contract another disease in place of the first, namely, the disease of prodigality. The middle position between the two diseases is the sign of moral health. The criterion by which we know that the mean has been fully attained, is that we perform it more easily and readily, and find more pleasure in it than in its opposites. To do with pleasure the actions belonging to a certain quality is a sign that this is a dominant characteristic. This is clear if we consider the acts which come as a result of a bad quality. An example might be the person who finds more pleasure in saving money and hoarding it than in spending it upon those who deserve it. Such a person is dominated by the character of illiberality, or avarice. His duty then is to increase his effort to be generous and to practise giving. If he reaches a state in which he finds more pleasure in giving, even to those who do not deserve it, than in proper economy, then he is dominated by the disease of prodigality. His duty then is to practise restraint. The principle is that the individual must keep watch on himself and scrutinise his own character, judging it according to the "pleasantness" and "unpleasantness" he finds in each kind of action. In the matter of using money, a person attains the mean when he reaches a state in which he pays no attention to money so that giving and saving become alike to him. Money will come to be like water, in that he keeps it to meet his needs and

gives it to those who need it. The soul that reaches such a stage enjoys moral health in respect of this particular quality. It must achieve this in all the moral qualities until it comes to have no interest in things that are connected with this world. So the soul will journey from this world having no ties with it, and return to its God "well pleased" and "accepted". (See part I p. 35)

Now, the exact mean (al wasat al haḥai) is held by Al Ghazali to be extremely difficult to define. According to him it is finer than a hair and sharper than the edge of a sword. Hence the person who succeeds in keeping to it in this world will be able to pass easily along the sirāt al mustaḥsin (the straight path) in the world to come. But the fact is that few people succeed in keeping to the exact mean in this world and therefore few escape some sort of suffering in the world to come. Al Ghazali thinks, however, that people vary in the amount of punishment they receive in the world to come in proportion to their deviation from the mean.

It is true, Al Ghazali admits, that achieving istiḥṣān (keeping to the exact mean), in this world, is an extremely difficult task. Nevertheless, men should continue to strive towards that state, even if they cannot attain it. The person who desires salvation, concludes Al Ghazali, will find no salvation except through good actions; hence he must watch his

moral qualities, scrutinise them and seek the right method of
(1)
treating them.

(1) Thyā Vol.III pp. 54²⁴ - 55.

PART V.

CHILD EDUCATION

Al Ghazali's scheme of child education is most clearly inspired and coloured throughout by his moral and spiritual ideas. His whole policy for the education of children rests on the assumption that a child is by nature neither good nor bad, but is equally ready to be affected by the forces of good or evil. From this it follows that the task of education must be directed to safeguard^{ing} the child against corrupt influences in his environment and to implanting in him the seeds of good character. Al Ghazali repeatedly emphasises that safeguarding children from bad companions is all-important as a negative principle in their education. Protection from vices and the purification of the heart are phrases constantly repeated which reflect these guiding principles of his theory. At the same time he emphasises no less strongly the importance of a positive principle even in the education of very early childhood; the positive principle which for him governs the whole theory of production of good character. It must be remembered, however, that the aim of all moral teaching, in his view, is purely religious. The doctrine that this world is important only as an avenue to the next world must be implanted in the child and carefully nurtured so as to yield good fruit in the world to come, for the supreme goal is the meeting with God in which eternal happiness is found.

Al Ghazali sees Reason as playing only a small part in early childhood. He holds, therefore, that a child who has not reached tamyiz (the development of reason during the period following puberty), should not be taught moral and religious rules through logical explanation, but by a process of indirect persuasion and wise management. He does not define by chronological limits the different stages of a child's development, but speaks of the various characteristics of these stages, and of the educational schemes suited to each of them. He treats separately of home and school education and, though he regards these as closely linked, he tends to stress constantly the greater importance of the home and the rest of the child's environment in comparison with the education he receives in school.

Since it is these influences, not reason, which are important during childhood, the upbringing of children must aim at making them familiar with moral and religious rules, so that as soon as they are sufficiently mature they can be enabled to understand the reasons for what they have been taught in childhood. This introduction of reason into moral and religious education is what, for Al Ghazali, forms the line of demarcation between child and adult education.

The child of whom Al Ghazali writes and thinks is the male child; for he speaks sometimes of things and attributes belong-

ing to boys in contrast to girls. He has boys' clothing in
(1)
mind when referring to the child's dress, and he enjoins that
the child, when suffering corporal punishment, must not cry
(2)
out or make a fuss "like women". Yet most of what he has to
say in the matter of child education can apply to either sex,
and Al Ghazali is here only following the general line of
Muslim tradition, where the male is always foremost in
educational policy.

Underlying the whole of Al Ghazali's educational theory
is the principle of reward and punishment. The incentives for
the adult are the hope of Heaven and the fear of Hell;
correspondingly awe of father, and dread of social censure
together with the promise of praise and commendation are to be
prominent features in forming the child's character. Al
Ghazali does indeed urge discreet handling of the fear element;
but this does not imply any departure from his general
principle of reward and punishment.

After this brief outline of Al Ghazali's general views I
shall endeavour to present in greater detail his scheme of
child education.

The Nature of Child

In his insistence on the natural passivity of children he

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.63.12.

(2) Ihya' Vol.III p.63

likens their new-born hearts to blank sheets of paper ready for good or evil writing. The writing is the work of environment. He says that how children are brought up is a matter of the greatest importance. The child is given as a trust to his parents; his pure heart is a precious jewel, not engraved with any impression, but ready to retain all that may be impressed upon it. If a child is accustomed to goodness he will grow good, and his life will be happy in this world and the next. If he is accustomed to evil and left to grow wild like an animal, he will grow up unhappy and come to ruin. Al Ghazali maintains that, as parents are responsible for training their child to good or evil, they will be rewarded if they choose the good way, and punished if they neglect the child or train him in evil ways. His emphasis on parental responsibility rests on a quotation from the Quranic verse: "God says, 'All you believers must protect yourselves and your families (ahlukum) from the Fire.'" Ahlikum here refers particularly to the children. He writes further: "The child is born susceptible to the influence of good or evil; it is his parents who incline him to the one or the other. The Prophet said: 'every child is born according to al fitrah, but his parents make him Jewish, Christian, or Magi.'"⁽¹⁾

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.62

In this saying of the Prophet the sense of the word fitrah is uncertain and has been disputed by Muslim scholars. From the context in which Al Ghazali uses the quotation I conclude that by fitrah he understands "the natural disposition". This meaning would support his use of the analogy of the uncarved stone for the child's heart, and his view that, since anything can be engraved on it, all religious beliefs are the product of education.

Here the question arises: are these views compatible with Al Ghazali's doctrine of innate ideas, his doctrine that belief in God is innate in human nature, and that every soul is endowed with it? (See Part II p. 64) He quotes the Quranic verse: "The fitrah of God which he planted in man at his creation" and takes fitrah here to mean faith or belief in God. Commenting on this passage he writes: "It means that every human being has the disposition to believe in God; has, thus, a knowledge of things as they are. Such faith and knowledge are implicit in him, in the sense that they are capable of being realised". The belief in God, asserted by Al Ghazali to be established in the child at birth, is - in my opinion - to be thought of not as already in being, but as a capacity, a potential belief, which it is the function of education to bring into being. Hence there is no contradiction here because Al Ghazali speaks of the nature of the child as being free from

any impressions, he speaks of the actuality of moral and religious beliefs and these undoubtedly do not exist in the child's nature, but develop in him in course of time as the result of the education that he receives from his parents and other influences of his environment.

The task of education, Al Ghazali holds, is to help the child to overcome worldly difficulties as well as to protect him from the Fire of the world to come. This help or protection is secured through disciplining him and fostering good character in him; education also helps and protects him in a negative way when it safeguards him against evil companions and refuses to allow him to become accustomed to an easy life or develop the love of ornament and luxury. For if he grows up with these inclinations he will spend all his life seeking them and then he will come to ruin. Education should take charge of the child from the very beginning of his life. It must provide him in his nursing and lactation with a good and pious woman; his nourishment must come from a lawful source; for the milk which comes from an unlawful source has no blessing, and if the nurture of the child is drawn from such a source, his clay (tinah), will be kneaded from filth, and his nature become inclined to evil things.⁽¹⁾

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.62

Development of Social and Moral Consciousness

From this warning in relation to the very early nurture of the child, Al Ghazali proceeds to speak of the dawn of social and moral consciousness. He desires the child's guardian to be ready to recognise what is in truth the first sign of the development of a 'sensus communis' (tamyiz), an awareness of himself in a social environment. This sign, which should be watched for and welcomed when it appears, is shyness (haya') which is manifested in the child growing bashful in manners and less spontaneous in behaviour. Al Ghazali must refer to the sort of occasion when a child appears to restrain himself from doing what he wants because he has become aware of the disapproval of others. When this happens, Al Ghazali thinks, it is because the light of reason is dawning in him, developing his sense of right and wrong, and leading him to choose one form of behaviour rather than another.

This shyness, therefore, is a particularly precious gift of God, a good omen which indicates the awakening of the sense of morality. It is a stage which precedes the ripening of reason at the time of puberty. It is important to note that the shy child is a promising child. His shyness must not be ignored, but regarded as a sign of sensitive awareness of his social environment ('sensus communis' or tamyiz), of which his

education should take full advantage. Al Ghazali, however, says little of how this is to be done. On the other hand, there are dangers of the child's social awareness also making him susceptible to corrupting influence. He must be guarded from those who may tempt him to indulge his bad inclinations (such as those discussed in the following sections). A child whose early years are neglected is likely to develop such bad qualities as lying, envy, calumny, importunity, meddling and impudence. From all of these it is the function of a sound
(1)
education to protect him.

The Child and his Food

The first quality which appears in the child is greed for food, and this impulse must be rightly disciplined. A child should eat only with his right hand, say "In the name of God" before he starts to eat and must take only the food which is nearest to him. He must not hurry to the table before others and must not gaze at the food nor at other people eating. He must not hurry his own eating and must chew his food properly. He must not stain his hands or clothing and must sometimes eat his food without condiments so that he may not think that condiments are always necessary; gluttony must be made repulsive to him by pointing out to him that a glutton is behaving like a

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.62.

beast and by disparaging in his presence the greedy child and praising the child who is well-mannered and content with little food. The virtue of unselfishness and of being satisfied with rough food must be rendered admirable to him. ⁽¹⁾

Schooling

It is obvious from Al Ghazali's account that home education must continue even after the child goes to school; hence the parents must retain importance in his education in the later period of childhood after he goes to school. The first task of school is to provide the child with some academic instruction but its function must include responsibility for his moral upbringing.

Now the aim of the child's first school (maktab), is to teach him by heart the Quran and some of the Traditions and instruct him in the biographies of pious people in order to develop his admiration of good people. For similar moral reasons Al Ghazali excludes from literature the teaching of love poetry. The child should not only be kept away from love poetry but from mixing with those who maintain that this kind of poetry is a sort of gentleness and refinement. This, Al Ghazali thinks, implants in children the seeds of immorality. ⁽²⁾

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.62

(2) Ihya' Vol.III pp. 62 - 63.

Conduct

In bringing the child up to have a good character, Al Ghazali holds that instruction about what sort of conduct is good is far less effective than mere indirect ways of influencing his conduct. If a child behaves well, he should be commended, rewarded with something that pleases him, and praised in the presence of other people for his good behaviour. If he goes astray from his good conduct, his misdemeanour should be recognised and pointed out to him, but he should not be made to think of it as a fault so grave that no other person could ever commit it. This is particularly important if he himself tries to hide his misdemeanour and prevent other people from knowing of it. If the child repeats a misdemeanour he should be admonished in private and it must thus be made clear to him that his misbehaviour is not trivial; he must be warned against doing it again; and told that if he does so, other people will know of it and then he will be disgraced among them.

Al Ghazali warns parents and teachers "against making a habit of reproaching the child; for this will make the reproach tolerable to him; he will become used to it, and this will encourage further misdeeds. When this point is reached any advice that is given will have no effect upon his heart".

Al Ghazali emphasises the importance of the child's

parents in securing his stability. The father must be consistent in his treatment of his child, he must preserve his dignity when addressing him, and must reproach him only occasionally. The mother must take advantage of the child's respect for his father and in Al Ghazali's words invoke his father's name "to awe him and restrain him from wrongdoing."

When the child starts to develop a sense of right and wrong he must be carefully watched. "He must be prevented from doing things secretively, for he only conceals what he feels is wrong."⁽¹⁾

Furthermore, Al^{Ghazali} gives a number of specific examples of the social and moral teaching that should shape the future character and personality of the child. In their small society, children can absorb such ethical principles as suit their stage of maturity. The child must be prevented from being boastful of his parents' possessions or his food, clothing or school materials. He must be encouraged to show modesty and respect for all those who have to do with him, and he must be courteous in addressing them. He must be taught that he cannot take from his playmates anything that he may fancy; if he comes from a well-to-do home this is to be impressed upon him by teaching that to give and not to take is a mark of

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.63

good breeding, and that taking is mean and vile; but if he comes from a poor home, the lesson is to be impressed by teaching that greed and taking are servile and disgraceful, and that such behaviour befits a dog, which wags its tail while awaiting a piece of food. In general, the love of money and greed for it must be made repulsive to children and they must be warned that these are worse than snakes and scorpions, for the evil that results from love of money and greed for it is more harmful to children, as well as to adults, than poison.

The child must not be allowed much freedom of speech. He must not chatter nor start speaking unless he is spoken to, and then his answer must be relevant to the question. It must be made clear to him that talkativeness "indicates impudence, which is the mark of children who come from mean homes ..." He must be a good listener whenever spoken to by his elders ... he must be prevented from talking nonsense, from scurrility, cursing and swearing and must therefore be kept away from the company of those who indulge in these improprieties. It is from evil company that such bad talk is learnt, and here, as in general, the principle of good upbringing is to keep
(1)
children out of corrupting companionship.

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III p.63

Early Forms of Physical Instruction

Al Ghazali introduces some recommendations upon physical education. When the child reaches school age, he must be prevented from sleeping during the day because this conduces to laziness. As for his sleep at night, this should not be curtailed, but he should not be provided with soft bedding. He must have bedding that will make his members grow rough and prevent his body becoming fat. He must be accustomed to coarseness in bedding, clothing and food and he must be accustomed to do some walking during the day as well as exercises so that he may not form habits of laziness. He should be habituated not to expose his limbs nor hurry in his walking, he must not relax his hands when he walks, but should rather keep them to his chest.

He must be trained not to spit or to blow his nose in company; he must not yawn in the presence of others nor turn his back on them, he must not cross his legs while sitting nor lean his chin on his hand, nor support his head with his arm, for these are signs of laziness and the child must be taught the correct posture.

By way of recreation and relaxation the child should be allowed to play at games that are not thought improper, thus gaining relief from the tedium of school work; provided that he does not overtire himself. To deny the child play and

compel him to be continuously at work dulls his spirits, stunts his intelligence and embitters his life so that eventually he will do all he can to be rid of the sort of study that has been forced upon him. (1)

Instruction

When the child is on the ^hreshold of adolescence he has reached the preparatory period for full religious instruction. This instruction, which will cover both doctrine and religious observance, will be given when he reaches puberty. In the preparatory stage he must become familiar with some of the religious duties that he will have to perform as an adult. It is noticeable here that Al Ghazali refers to this period as the age of tamyiz (See p. 26) He says that when the child reaches the age of tamyiz he should not be allowed to neglect physical purification (taharah) and prayers; should be commanded to fast some of the days of Ramadan; and should be forbidden to wear silk and gold. He must be taught all that he needs of religious rules, and the temptations to wrong conduct that children are usually subject to. If the child is brought up in such a manner, then when he reaches puberty it will be possible for him to come to understand the reasons (asrar) for these rules. It will then be explained to him

(1) Ihya' Vol.III p.63

that all kinds of food are but 'medicines' and that their purpose is to provide the individual with the necessary strength to obey God; that this world is not worth while since it has no permanence and Death will terminate its pleasure. It is merely a dwelling to pass through; the Hereafter is the only permanent habitation. Death may be expected at any moment and the intelligent and wise is he who in this world makes provision for the next so that his rank near God may be high and his happiness in Paradise may be great.

If the upbringing of small children has been right, then these instructions at the time of puberty will be profitable and effectual, and endure in the heart as an engraving endures on a stone; if, on the other hand, the upbringing has been wrong, so that the child has become used to amusement, shamelessness, impudence, greed for food and clothing, ornamentation and vanity, then his nature will not be rightly formed for the acceptance of the truth, just as dry earth is ill-prepared for plastering a wall.⁽¹⁾

(1) Ihyā' Vol.III p. 63 - 64.

P A R T VI.

ADULT EDUCATION

We use the term Adult Education here as Al Ghazali uses it in contrast to child education. It means the education of young people after puberty. Adult education in its modern sense, meaning formal education, other than "Higher Education", for those who have passed school age, is too modern to exist in Al Ghazali's system of education. His adult education commences with the child's puberty when reason is developed and the individual becomes responsible for performing religious duties.

The Value of Education

The education of early childhood is not the responsibility of the child, but of his elders, particularly his parents and teachers; the emphasis, moreover, is on moral influence and training. Al Ghazali considers that from the age of puberty each individual begins to have a responsibility for his own education. He is responsible for his own further moral education, and Al Ghazali's thought on this subject has been given in Part IV. VI. But whereas academic studies played little or no part in the education of the young child, such studies play a major part in the education of the adult. Al Ghazali accordingly introduces his exposition of this education, which includes both obligatory studies and

optional studies, with an examination of the reasons why such education is both valuable and necessary. This justification is appropriate in introducing his thought on that part of education for which the individual himself is responsible.

The value of knowledge, and hence the value of education, is attested in Al Ghazali's view both by authority of religious opinion and by the conclusions of reason. We shall now review, first his account of the importance accorded to education by religion, where he quotes many Quranic verses and extracts from the Traditions; and secondly his own argument on logical grounds for the necessity of education and its value.

(a) Religious authority.

To elucidate what is taught by religion as to the excellence of education, Al Ghazali quotes the following Quranic verses and Traditions:

In encouraging people to seek knowledge God said referring to teachers, "ask those who know if you do not know." He also said "they must warn their people when they return to them". Al Ghazali comments that what is here meant by this warning is "education and guidance."

The Prophet in exhorting people to have education said: "God would guide to a road that leads to heaven him who

follows a road seeking education." "Verily the angels spread their wings for him who seeks education, expressing their gratification at what he desires." In addressing the Muslims he said "to go and learn a chapter of knowledge is better for you than to perform a hundred prayers"; "seek education even if it is to be found in China"; "knowledge is a treasure whose keys are questions, therefore ask for it, for by questioning four persons are rewarded, the questioner, the teacher, the listener and he who admires them."⁽¹⁾

(b) The conclusions of reason.

Reason also can prove the necessity and the excellence of education; but to be convinced of its excellence one must first be convinced of the excellence of knowledge, which is the subject-matter of education. Al Ghazali therefore proceeds to enquire into the nature of knowledge.

The things which are good belong to one or other of the following classes: (1) that which is good for the sake of itself; (2) that which is good for the sake of others; (3) that which is good for the sake of itself and others. Happiness in the world to come and the Vision of God is good for the sake of itself. Money is good for the sake of others; The health of the body is good for the sake of

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p.8¹⁷ - 10.

itself and others; for instance the soundness of the foot is good in itself from the point of view that the body is free from pain and it is also good for the sake of others from the point of view that when the foot is sound it is used for achieving human purposes and needs. Now if we examine knowledge by this criterion, we find it good in itself, and we also find it a means to the world to come and eternal happiness. As eternal happiness is the most excellent thing for man, it necessarily follows that that which leads to it is excellent; that which leads to it ^{is} knowledge and good acts; since good acts cannot be censured except through the knowledge of what is good, the basis of happiness in both this world and the world to come is knowledge. There is also another criterion by which the excellence of a thing is judged, and this is its fruit. It is obvious that the fruit of knowledge is nearness to God in the world to come; in this world its fruit is honour, reverence, power and respect.

Al Ghazali here points out that he is considering the excellence of knowledge in general; specific sciences of course vary greatly in their nature and accordingly in their excellence also. He concludes: The excellence of learning and teaching, (education), is fully attested by what has now been said; for if it is established that knowledge is the most excellent thing, it follows that learning must be the

seeking of the most excellent, and teaching the imparting of
(1)
it.

Obligatory Education

By obligatory education for adults Al Ghazali means the education which provides the minimum amount of religious instruction necessary for every individual. The Prophet said that seeking education (ʿilm) was the duty of every Muslim, but we have to ask what kind of education is necessary. Al Ghazali declares that people disagree as to the kind of education which is obligatory. He mentions that every group of scholars interprets ʿilm according to the science in which they are engaged. The theologians (Mutakallimīn), claim that education means scholastic theology, through which monotheism and the deity of God and His attributes come to be understood. The jurists claim that what is meant in the Tradition is jurisprudence, for this teaches all the acts of worship and also what is lawful and unlawful. The Quran commentators and the Traditionists restrict obligatory education to the study of the Quran and Traditions, on the ground that through the study of these all other sciences come to be understood. The Sufis say that what is meant is Sufism and this in turn is interpreted by them in

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p.12

different ways. Some of them maintain that it is the knowledge of the soul, its states and its position near God. Others think it is the knowledge of Sincerity and the defects of the Soul.⁽¹⁾

After surveying these different views Al Ghazali gives his own definition of obligatory education. To him the truth is that knowledge (‘ilm) is divided into practical knowledge (‘ilm al-mu‘amalah), and contemplative knowledge (‘ilm al-mukashafah). He thinks that what is meant by ‘ilm in the Tradition is Practical Knowledge. This "practical knowledge", as has been seen in connection with his theory of knowledge, includes a spiritual element. Having decided that the knowledge which education must seek is "practical knowledge", Al Ghazali goes on to define what this practical knowledge is; that is, what are the obligatory duties with which every adult is charged by God.⁽²⁾ (Al Ghazali explicitly excludes the insane from such responsibility.) These duties are of three kinds: duties of belief; duties of practice; and duties of omission. We will now examine what Al Ghazali has to say about each.

Instruction on Duties of Belief.

When the individual becomes mature, when, that is, he

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p.13.9.

(2) Ihya' Vol.I p.13

reaches puberty or at latest, when he reaches years of discretion (thought to be at about eighteen years of age), the first duty he has to perform - given a sound mind - is to learn and to understand the meaning of the Words of Faith (kalimat al-shahadah), that is to say 'There is no good but God and Muhammad is the messenger of God'. His duty now includes using reason to understand the meaning, but this strict obligation does not include meditation upon the rational proofs of these truths. It is sufficient that he understands and accepts them as true and believes without doubt. Understanding of the meaning may be secured by acceptance of authority, for the Prophet accepted from the uneducated Arabs a simple belief and profession of faith. Acceptance of this kind is sufficient for the fulfilment of what is strictly obligatory. Al Ghazali explains that since understanding the Words of Faith is all that is obligatory upon an individual at this stage, "if such a person dies afterwards, he dies obedient to God."⁽¹⁾

Furthermore, Al Ghazali maintains that it is also part of obligatory education that the adult should be taught the doctrines of Heaven, the Fire, the Day of Judgment, and the Resurrection. This knowledge is a complementary duty to

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p.13

knowing the Words of Faith, for as a corollary to the belief that Muhammad is the Messenger of God, the adult must know also the nature of the message which Muhammad communicates, namely ^{that} he who obeys God and his Prophet deserves Heaven, and (1) he who disobeys them will have the Fire as his reward.

Instruction on Duties of Practice

The next obligation, after the fundamental doctrines are understood and accepted, is to have instruction in the performance of religious practices. This obligation relates only to the fundamental ordinances, such as physical purification, (tahārah), prayer, fasting, Ramadan, alms-giving, and Pilgrimage.

It is not obligatory for instruction to be received on these ordinances before the time comes for their performance. It is obligatory only to receive instruction as a preparation for the performance of each ordinance. For example, before the time arrives when he is required to perform the ordinance of prayer, he must receive instruction on physical purification; as also instruction on the actual forms and gestures of prayer.

Similarly when Ramadan is due, it is the duty of the adult to obtain instruction on fasting. If he possesses

(1) Ihyā' Vol.I p.14 - 15.

wealth at the time of puberty, it is obligatory also to receive certain instruction on alms-giving. The due time for the commencement of alms-giving in such a case is the lapse of one year from reaching puberty, and it is at this time that instruction is obligatory. Similarly instruction on the Pilgrimage is not necessary until the adult has intimated his intention of performing the pilgrimage, but it then becomes⁽¹⁾ obligatory.

It is to be noted here that Al Ghazali's view that instruction on religious practices should be given gradually in relation to the practical need is in line with the view generally accepted by Muslim educationists. He considers all strictly obligatory practices and instruction to be required solely on religious grounds; that is to say, they are not obligatory for ethical reasons, nor are they to be justified by Sufi doctrines. Orthodox Muslim teaching is that only that instruction is obligatory which is necessary for the fulfilment of religious obligation. Al Ghazali does hold, indeed, that there is a sense in which the practices of the Sufis are also obligatory. But in this context, he is only concerned to say that there are no strict obligations except the obligations of religious belief and practice.

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p. 14

Duties of Omission

Positive education on duties of belief and practice is incomplete without negative education on forbidden practices, or duties of omission. Instruction on these is therefore considered by Al Ghazali as complementary to the obligatory education described above, but is obligatory only in relation to circumstances. He writes: "as regards forbidden acts, it is necessary to relate the instruction on them to changing circumstances and conditions. It is not obligatory, for instance, for the dumb to have instruction on forbidden words, nor is it obligatory for the blind to have instruction on unlawful looking (nazar) ..., but an adult who lives in a country where forbidden things are customary, if, for example, he lives in a country where wine is taken or pig is eaten, then instruction on these forbidden things is obligatory."⁽¹⁾

Al Ghazali treats in a similar manner the problem of whether instruction should be given on controversial questions of theology as a safeguard against heretical influences. He takes the view that such instruction is necessary for the safeguarding of true beliefs when a person has conceived doubts about the "Words of Faith" (kalimat al shahadah).

To understand on what occasions instruction may precede

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p.14

the emergence of doubts it is necessary to note Al Ghazali's theory of the causes of disbelief. He holds that the causes which impair belief are of two kinds: (1) those evil thoughts which come naturally, (2) those which are the result of environment, as when the person lives in a country where scepticism is widespread and heretics are respected. Such a person should be given the necessary instruction to protect his belief from potential doubts; but if heretics have already affected his belief then he must have instruction to eradicate these doubts. (1)

Optional Education

Fard kifayah is the term for 'communal duty' in Muslim canon law. Al Ghazali thinks it the fard kifayah of all Muslim communities to produce ^{an} adequate number of students of such subjects, and practitioners of such occupations, as are essential to the general well-being, though not obligatory or binding on all the faithful. This work of fulfilling the fard kifayah is both religious and secular. The religious duty is supplementary to obligatory religious learning and duties and helps to further the understanding of these. An account of both groups of study follows.

Religious Studies

These studies are derived from God through the Prophet. Those sciences which may be acquired through reason, experience

(1) Ihya' Vol.I. p. 14

and "hearsay" (samāʿ), such as arithmetic, medicine and languages, cannot alone lead to this knowledge. Subjects which can do so, Al Ghazali classifies as: -

I. Main Subjects

(1) The Quran, the Holy Book; (2) The Traditions of the Prophet (Sunnah); (3) The general agreement of the Muslim Community; and (4) The teaching of the Companions (āthar al-sahābah).

He treats the third as essential because it leads to the Traditions, and the fourth because the Companions lived when the Revelation came, and could understand it, therefore, to a degree not possible for after-comers. It is because their experience taught them far more than any spoken word, or writings, that the learned (ʿulamāʾ) declare that their teaching must be upheld and followed.

II. Supplementary Subjects

These are subjects which according to Al Ghazali are derived from the previous main subjects, and go beyond the spoken words that are recorded to examine the meanings which minds working upon these words have arrived at. These interpretations have developed to such an extent that through and beyond explicit teaching other truths are apprehended. One instance of such interpretation is the saying of the Prophet: "The judge must not judge while he is furious (ghadbān)."

This saying has been interpreted in several senses, for the word ghadban, of which the usual meaning is "furious", is also interpreted as "starving" and "sick". Thus the judge is starving or affected by sickness.

Interpretation of the main sources is of two kinds: (a) that which is connected with secular affairs, is contained in the books of jurisprudence, and is in charge of the jurists; and (b) that which is connected with the world to come and is the science of the "states of ^{the} heart" (ahwal al qalb) and their value, praiseworthy and blameworthy.

III. Introductory Subjects

These are means to the study of the Quran and the Traditions. Because every religion emerges through a language, ^hence the philology, grammar and writing of that language must be studied, so that the sacred books may be rightly understood and expounded.

IV. Complementary Subjects

The study of these is connected with the Quran, and it is divided into: (a) That which deals with the different versions of the Quran, its words and vocables; (b) That which is connected with its content, and this is a study of the explanation (tafsir) of the Quran which depends not only on the Text but also on the Traditions, for the meaning of the text is not always certain from the mere study of the words of the

Quran. (c) That which is connected with the injunctions (ahkām) such as the question of the abrogation of injunctions (al-nāsikh wal Mansūkh), the General and Specific (al'āmm wal khāss) and all that is contained in the study of the origin of jurisprudence. This complementary subject deals also with the Traditions, and includes the science of knowing the Traditionists, their names and their family relationships, the names of the Companions and their qualities, and an acquaintance with the integrity of the narrators and their biographies in order to distinguish between the weak and strong Traditions, and so forth. It is complementary to the Traditions and to the teaching of the Companions. (1)

Secular Studies

The "subjects and occupations" referred to on p.194⁷ as "essential to the well-being", though not "obligatory or binding on the faithful" are, according to Al Ghazali: medicine as essential to physical health; arithmetic for the handling of wills and inheritances and business matters; also farming, weaving, building. All those who are thus employed need not study the profounder or more scientific aspects of their skills, but some should do so.

Another kind of secular education, which includes the

(1) Ihyā' Vol.I p.15 - 6.

study of good poetry and history, is optional but not in the sense of communal duty.

There is a blameworthy part of secular education which includes the study of bewitchment (al-sihr), talismans (talāsim) and jugglery (sha'bahah), etc. ⁽¹⁾ Al Ghazali asserts that this must be excluded from the curriculum.

After reviewing Al Ghazali's scheme of religious and secular education it remains to consider the underlying ideas which direct his policy in designing these. In these ideas the following are the governing principles in summary form:

1. Al Ghazali's religious purpose here inspires and dictates his whole system of education. He refers to the twofold dogma - that God is the Supreme Power and that the Prophet Muhammed is His messenger, as kalimat al shahadah. Belief in the Hereafter arises from this faith, therefore consciousness of the awards of Heaven and the punishments of Hell must be firmly established in the adult being. The first stage of education is concerned with these beliefs.
2. Advanced or specialised theological teaching is not obligatory. But unless it is studied by some sufficiently for the protection of the Faith, there is danger of heresy.
3. The duty to learn about worship and ritual is obligatory.

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p. 15.19.

To neglect it would be disobedience to God, unless it were the result of ignorance.

4. Instruction about forbidden thoughts and activities, especially those most likely to occur in a pupil's daily life, is obligatory. Such instruction must be explicit and detailed about both wrong thinking and wrong doing, so that both may be recognised and avoided. This can be called negative education.

5. The obligatory studies should not be imposed on the student all at once at the time of puberty but rather by degrees. The sort of instruction necessary at each stage is determined by the duties which have to be undertaken at that stage. The course is progressively related to the changing life of the individual as it is developed in accordance with the ordinances of religion.

6. The obligatory education which is suggested in the Tradition of the Prophet, namely, "that seeking education is the duty of every Muslim" appears to mean education for all, male and female. With respect to women The Tradition does not explicitly indicate the necessity for education, but on the above evidence it is fair to assume that this obligation in respect of religious duties implies that they were also to be given the necessary educational preparation for these duties. Al Ghazali is orthodox in his general view here and we may therefore conclude that he intended his educational scheme to

apply to women also. Though the word Muslim in its grammatical usage applies to the male, yet there is room for the assumption that according to the Arabic traditions the term "man" sometimes includes both sexes, especially when its usage is connected with fundamental religious duties where man and woman are on equal footing.

6. Studies included in "optional" education are divided into religious and non-religious. Religious knowledge originates from the supernatural, hence neither reason alone nor human experience alone is a sufficient guide to it. The deepest insights of religious consciousness are a matter of revelation. Education in such knowledge can only come from authority, hence the Quran as a text-book and also the Traditions of the Prophet are the main sources of such education.

7. Secular education is that which is connected with human experience, and depends mainly upon reason and human skill. All sciences, arts and crafts which serve to advance human welfare in this world belong to this category, and include medicine, arithmetic, geometry; the principal trades and professions such as farming, weaving, building; the supplementary trades which provide the principal trades with the necessary services, such as iron-working for farming and some other industries, and gleaning and spinning for weaving; ^{and} the connected trades such as bleaching and tailoring for weaving.

8. The foregoing sciences and crafts on which the life of the individual and the structure of society completely depends are purely secular. On the other hand there are some other secular studies which are intimately connected with religion in the sense that they help in the understanding of it. These are jurisprudence, languages, grammar, phonetics, the interpretation of the Quran and the sources of religious law, history, and poetry.

9. All sciences which are praiseworthy have a religious significance, for they serve as a means to the fulfilment of religious aims. For example, Al Ghazali considers jurisprudence as a secular science for the reason that its function is to deal with human relations in order to establish security among the members of society. The jurist is the person who is specialized in law, who can advise the ruler (Sultān) as to the right methods of governing people so that their well-being in this world is secured. From this point of view jurisprudence is a secular science. On the other hand it is closely connected with religion because secular life or the life of this world is like a seed-bed for the next and the ultimate aim of religion can be secured only through living in this world in preparation for the world to come. Thus (1) jurisprudence can also be considered as a religious science.

(1) Ihya' Vol.I p. 16.10.

10. Al Ghazali includes in his second group of Religious Studies (the supplementary studies) both jurisprudence and the "science of the world to come", and both are optional studies. This is a popular view that is held by the Muslim scholars, but Al Ghazali goes further and maintains in accord with the view of the Sufis, that spiritual knowledge is an ⁽¹⁾ obligatory duty.

11. Al Ghazali has excluded scholastic theology ('ilm al-kalām) and philosophy (falsafah) from his curriculum for the following reasons:

a) Scholastic theology is not regarded by him as an independent science, on the ground that all that is contained in it is either in the nature of useful proofs which are also contained in the Quran and the Traditions or blameworthy disputations and sectarian controversies, most of which are trivial. Some of these studies have no connection at all with religion and were not recognised in the time of the early Muslim, who rather considered such study as heretical. But Al Ghazali does not agree with this total condemnation. He believes that the justification for the condemnation has disappeared as a result of the recurring heresies which are liable to distract people from the simple doctrines of the

(1) Ihyā' Vol.I p. 19.21.

Quran and the Traditions and so create a need for proofs and theological demonstrations. Therefore what was forbidden in the early times has become permissible under the pressure of necessity; indeed the study of such a minimum amount of theology as may be necessary for refuting heretics has finally become one of the communal duties.

^{Philosophy}
b) Falsafah is also held by Al Ghazali not to be an independent science but rather a group of four branches: -

(i) Mathematics

The study of mathematical sciences is permissible to all adults except those who are weak and liable to be led by these sciences to other blameworthy sciences, for many people who have been engaged in them have eventually become heretics. On this account the weak should be prevented from plunging into them.

(ii) Formal Logic.

Formal logic, which consists in the devising of proofs and definitions according to special rules in order to prove theological principles, is a branch of philosophy which Al Ghazali believes should be considered as a part of theology.

(iii) Metaphysics, ('ilm al ilahīyyāt).

Metaphysics is a branch of philosophy which is concerned with the investigation into supernatural questions such as the Deity of God and His attributes. Al Ghazali maintains

that it is contained in scholastic theology and that the
(1)
philosophers have not introduced into it any method which is substantially different from that of the theologians. All they have introduced is theories most of which are irreligious and some of which are heretical, for example "iftizāl", the doctrine of the mu'tazalah, a theological Muslim sect, is not an independent science, but is a theological doctrine professed by a group of theologians who are extreme thinkers and who have introduced false doctrines. The Falāsifah in this sense are no more than a theological group.

(iv) Natural Philosophy or Physics

Al Ghazali maintains that natural philosophy is partly in disagreement with orthodox religion and is therefore not to be recognised as praiseworthy knowledge. Part of it however is concerned with investigation into the qualities and characteristics of matter and the nature of physical and chemical change. The function of this science is similar to the function of medicine, but with the difference that medicine is concerned with the human body, its health and disease, while natural science is concerned with bodies generally, in
(2)
respect of their changes and motion.

(1) The word here refers to a special branch of Theological Schools.

(2) Ihya' Vol.I p. 20.23.

The Duties of Students

Adult students have ethical duties and regulations to observe, which are necessary if the right aims of education are to be achieved. In this chapter we shall give a brief account of these duties.

1. Purity of the Heart.

True knowledge requires spiritual purification, which frees the soul from evil and makes possible the "worship of the heart". To attempt this worship of the heart (inward worship) without spiritual purification would be in vain, just as the outward actions of worship would be vain without physical purification. The light of knowledge is shed into the heart by God through the agency of His angels. His angels do not enter any dwelling unless it is cleansed and purified. If the heart is to be the right place for knowledge, it must be prepared for the entry of the angels who bring knowledge into it. To the objection that there are many students who are of bad character but still attain knowledge, Al Ghazali replies that knowledge of such a sort is far removed from that genuine knowledge which is effectual and leads to eternal happiness. He quotes Ibn Masūd's saying "knowledge is not virtuosity but is a light which is shed into the heart".

2. Devotion and concentration.

Since one cannot pay attention to two things at the same time and personal ties are disturbing, the student must reduce his wordly interests and leave his home and relatives.

Al Ghazali likens unconcentrated thought to the water of a canal which is carried off in branch channels; the earth moreover absorbs some of it and the air evaporates some of it and at the end nothing is left to reach the farm.

3. Humility and Obedience.

The student must be neither supercilious nor imperious but must completely submit to his teacher and listen to his direction just as the ignorant patient listens to the direction of a kind and expert doctor. He must be humble towards his teacher and ask for no honour or reward except in serving him. It is a sign of superciliousness to be too haughty to learn except from those who are renowned; moreover it is also a sign of great stupidity, for knowledge is the way to salvation and happiness, and a man who was seeking to be saved from a wild beast would hardly make it an issue whether his rescuer were a famous person or unknown. The student must be to his teacher like fertile soil which has received rain, absorbs the rain equally in every particle and is fully responsive to it. Whenever the teacher suggests to him a method of learning which he thinks wrong he must obey and leave aside his own opinion, realising that what seems to him

an error on the part of his teacher will benefit him, while what seems to himself to be correct will not; for experience shows that many things which appear strange at first, turn out to be of great value. Al Ghazali raises the possible objection that this is inconsistent with the freedom of questioning which is mentioned in the Quran verse "ask those who know if you do not know". He agrees with the principle suggested in this verse, and he says: "Yes, it is so, but the questioning must be restricted to the limit which the teacher allows; for questioning about what is beyond one's standard of understanding is blameworthy and the teacher is a better judge of what knowledge is suitable for his student and the appropriate time for revealing it. Before this moment, any questioning would be untimely."

4. The Beginner must avoid academic disputes and ambiguities.

The beginner must be safeguard^{ed} against disputed and diversity of views, whatever the studies he is engagedⁱⁿ may be, secular or religious, for such disputes will confuse his mind and discourage him from pursuing learning. Therefore he must first master the doctrines held and expounded by his teacher and afterwards he may pay attention to other views and problems. This duty of acceptance only applies when the teacher's views are personal convictions; if on the other hand he has no such views and his method is to quote the views of others and the accepted commentaries upon them, then the student must be on his guard, for

such a teacher would be more liable to mislead than to guide, for the blind cannot be well guided by the blind.

5. General education before specialization.

The student must first have a general education, for he must not be without knowledge of the aims and purpose of any of the praiseworthy sciences. After he has secured this, and if he has the opportunity for further study, he may take up any science he likes; but if he is unable to study it profoundly he must confine himself to the most important of its problems.

6. Learning must be systematic.

The student must consider the logical order of sciences, and must not engage in any one before he has studied that which is logically prior to it. There is a hierarchical system of sciences and the successful student is he who understands this hierarchy and in the study of each science directs himself to an understanding of how it leads to that which is immediately above it.

7. Academic Toleration.

The student must not be prejudiced against any science because of a dispute that has occurred among its exponents nor because of an error committed by one or more of them, moreover he must not be prejudiced because of inconsistency between their

practice and their theory. For this reason some people have abandoned philosophical and juristic studies; others are sceptical about medical studies because of errors committed by the learned, for example, a doctor's mistake in practice. Others believe in the validity of astrology because of a successful prediction by an astrologer. Both these attitudes are wrong, for a thing should be investigated and measured for itself; as Ali said "do not know the truth through men but know the truth, and then you know men".

8. The Criterion of Superiority of Sciences.

The student should know what it is that distinguishes a superior science. There are two separate criteria of this superiority: A science is superior because of either (1) the superiority of its aim (fruit); or (2) the precision and conclusiveness of its proofs. An example of one science being superior to another in respect of the first criterion is to be found in a comparison of religion and medicine. The aim of the science of religion is concerned with eternal life and the aim of medicine is concerned with temporal life, therefore the science of religion is superior. An example of one science being superior to another in respect of the second criterion, is to be found in comparing mathematics and astronomy. Mathematics is superior because of the precision and conclusiveness of its proofs. If, however, mathematics is contrasted with medicine, then medicine

is superior in respect of its aim, mathematics is superior to medicine in respect of its proofs, but since the criterion of the "aim" is the more ultimate criterion, in Al Ghazali's views, medicine is superior to mathematics. Thus it becomes clear that the most excellent of all sciences is the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of the means that leads to it.

9. Immediate and Ultimate Aims of the Student.

The immediate aim of the student should be the adornment and embellishment of his inner life by virtue. His ultimate aim must be to come to God and ascend to the neighbourhood of the heavenly community of the angels and the saints; his aim must not be leadership, wealth, power, or rivalry. If this nearness to God is the ultimate aim of the student, he must inevitably seek that which comes closest to his aim, that is to say, the "science of the world to come." Nevertheless, the student must not despise the other sciences which are praiseworthy.

10. Sciences and their Aims.

The student should consider the relationship of sciences to their aim. He should both give preference to the immediate over the remote and to the important over the unimportant. The important is that which concerns us and what concerns us is our interest in this world and the world to come. Since it is not possible to gain the pleasures of both this world and the world to come, as is mentioned in the Quran, then the choice must be

that which is the more important; and the pleasure of the world to come is eternal and therefore, concerns us more. This world should therefore be regarded as a temporary dwelling and the body as a riding animal (markab) serving the purposes of the soul. All action should become means to the one end, the meeting with God in which all the eternal pleasure is found. ⁽¹⁾

The Duties of the Teacher

Al Ghazali points out that man in relation to knowledge has four states just as in his relation to wealth. The seeker of wealth has:

- 1) - A state of collecting, or acquisition.
- 2) - A state of saving that which he gains and so becoming self-sufficient.
- 3) - A state of spending on himself, benefiting from what he has acquired.
- 4) - A state of spending on others, or benefiting others through generosity; this is the noblest state.

So, too, with knowledge, there is a state of acquiring, a state of storing, a state of reflecting or benefiting oneself, and a state of imparting to others; this last is also the noblest, for he who knows, practises his knowledge, and teaches, is described as great in the realm of heaven, and is like the sun which shines

(1) For the whole of this section see Thyā Vol.I pp.43¹⁶ - 47.

and illuminates. He who teaches and does not practise his knowledge, is like the book which benefits others, while it is of no benefit to itself, or the candle which gives light to others while it is burning itself away. Al Ghazali declares that the person who is engaged in teaching is performing an honourable task and in order to fulfil it he should observe the following duties and regulations:

1. He should be kind to his pupils and treat them as if they were his children; the Prophet said: " I am to you like a father to his children". His kindness must be directed to saving them from the Fire in the world to come. Thus the teacher's responsibility towards the pupil is greater than that of his parents, for the parent is responsible for the existence and temporal life of the child, whereas the teacher is responsible for his happiness in eternal life.

What Al Ghazali means by "the teacher", is, as he explains, the teacher of spiritual knowledge, or of that secular knowledge which is connected with our aim for the future life; as to teaching for the sake of this world only, this is considered by Al Ghazali as dangerous and eventually destructive.

2. Al Ghazali urges the teacher to follow the example of the Prophet in teaching without payment. He should not charge any fee for his tuition, nor must he expect any reward for it. He must teach for the sake of God. He must not feel that he is

doing any favour to his students, though they are in fact under an obligation to him. On the contrary he must consider that they are doing him a favour in surrendering their hearts to him to be planted with knowledge, so that he (through planting knowledge in them) draws near to God. Al Ghazali draws the analogy of a man lending you his land in order to plantⁱⁿ it for yourself something which is beneficial to you; the profit which you gain is more than that which the owner of the land gains. So also your reward from God, for teaching, is greater than that of the student. This is the sense of the ^uQ_Aranic Verse: "Oh, my people I would not ask you any money for it; verily my reward is only from God". Al Ghazali states that all the wealth there is in this world should be "a servant of the body" and the body is the bearer or "riding animal" of the soul. Knowledge, however, should be that which is served, so that the excellence of the soul may be secured. Therefore, he who seeks wealth through knowledge, inverts the functions of the servant and the served.

3. In advising and guiding his students the teacher must prevent them from proceeding to any stage of knowledge before they are prepared for it, or engaging in any difficult science before they have completed the study of the easy. He must make clear to his students that the aim of seeking knowledge is nearness to God and not leadership, self-assertion, or rivalry. He must make these things appear to them as unlovely as possible.

If the teacher discovers that a student is seeking knowledge for secular purposes only, then he must examine whether the student is interesting himself in blameworthy studies, or in praiseworthy studies. ~~but for a while~~ If the student is interested in a purely secular aspect of jurisprudence, that is to say, the differences between jurisprudential schools, or in the blameworthy dialectics of theology, then his teacher must prevent him from engaging in such studies. The Religious studies are the study of the Quran and the Traditions and also the sciences in which the early Muslims were engaged, namely, the "science" of the qualities of the soul and the method of combating its defects. On the other hand, the student may be interested in sciences which belong to the religious sciences, but be interested in them for secular reasons. The teacher should not turn him away from these sciences, for there is hope that he may eventually discover from them the wickedness of his purely secular aim. For there is embodied in these praiseworthy sciences the seeds of knowledge, which may lead him to the fear of God and the disdain of this world, and thus turn him from his secular aim.

4. Al Ghazali advises the teacher to use an indirect approach in his moral instruction. He declares that this is one of the most delicate problems in the art of education. The teacher must restrain the student from misdemeanour through suggestion

and not by direct correction, through kindness rather than reproach. Undisguised correction will damage the relationship between the teacher and his student and will cause the student to be obstinate and aggressive. On the other hand, the method of suggestion stimulates the virtuous and intelligent students and provokes them to think out the meanings of his hints.

5. Al Ghazali does not want the teacher to be one-sided towards his subject, or to be prejudiced against other subjects. He points out that the teacher who is in charge of a particular science should not depreciate others. He gives the example of the teacher of grammar who underrates the science of jurisprudence, or the teacher of jurisprudence who underrates the sciences which are concerned with the Traditions and the Quran, or the teacher of theology who distracts students from the study of jurisprudence. These qualities of one-sidedness and contempt for others' studies Al Ghazali maintains to be blameworthy ones which teachers must avoid. The teacher who is in charge of a single science must widen the outlook of his students and pave for them the road to other sciences. If he is in charge of more than one science he must consider orderly progress in promoting the student from one study to the next.

6. The teacher must take into consideration the mental attainment of his student. He must not give him work which lies beyond his understanding, for this would discourage him and cause him

confusion. Al Ghazali quotes the statement of Ali (the cousin of the Prophet) when he said, pointing to his chest, "here is an abundance of knowledge had I found for it bearers". Al Ghazali comments that Ali spoke the truth for the hearts of the pious are the "graves" of hidden knowledge (asrār), and the learned should not disclose all he knows to anyone, especially to him who does not understand it.

7. Al Ghazali emphasizes that special care must be given by the teacher to the backward student. He must teach him only the simple things that suit his intelligence, without discouraging him by suggesting to him that there is beyond the simple work something more difficult which he cannot understand. This has been referred to in connection with the discussion of individual differences.

8. Al Ghazali urges the teacher to set a good example to his students. The teacher must practise his knowledge so that his conduct does not contradict his teaching. He points out that knowledge is apprehended by insight, while action is perceived by sight. Since the number of those capable of perception greatly exceed the number of those capable of insight, any contradiction between a teacher's practice and his preaching would be a great obstacle to acceptance of his teaching. To illustrate this, he says that the teacher who is to be a guide must be to his student like the stamp that is impressed upon

the clay. There would be no effect on the clay had there been no engraving on the stamp. Another example is the stick and its shadow: How could the shadow be straight if the stick were crooked!?

(1)

(1) For the whole of this section see Ihya' Vol.I pp.49?- 52.

CONCLUSION

Generally speaking the most valuable features of Al Ghazali's theory of education are those that come to him through the stern lessons of his own experience. It is therefore helpful to review his doctrine as a whole, the clear system of pedagogic procedure which it shapes, and the convictions and controversies out of which these emerged against the background of his spiritual biography, of which a brief sketch was attempted in the first pages of this study.

Al Ghazali has tasted the bitterness and frustrations of scepticism passing into unbelief, and had restored his faith by a long course of hard thinking assisted by Sufi discipline. Accordingly he applies himself to the task of protecting youth against the dangers to which he had himself succumbed by a system of instruction that was to place the truth that he had found upon a firm foundation of rationality stabilised by a traditional and religious discipline.

The sense of a spiritual unity underlying multiplicity of religious doctrines and practices which is apparent throughout Al Ihya' led Al Ghazali to go beyond the accepted requirements of physical asceticism, and to seek and enjoin a discipline of thought and study. In his practical plan for spiritual education he takes what is relevant from his Sufi training excluding what derives from contemplative knowledge.

In the searching examination of the different trends of Islamic theology which he undertook in the course of his search for truth he had observed how easily controversy on a vital theological issue could develop round single words, to which different scholars or sects were unconsciously assigning different meanings with the result that their argument proceeded at cross purposes.

It was with an acute recognition of the dangers from such misunderstandings that he elaborated his definition of key words - one of the most significant and original features of his work. His purpose was to assign to words a clear limitation and to eliminate any mysterious connection with the things they symbolize and to remove confusing changes and developments in meaning.

That Al Ghazali was complete master of his own terminology cannot be asserted; indeed he sometimes sets his translators and editors hard tasks in deciding between the different possible senses of the word he uses and in resolving the apparent inconsistencies of a theory. Such occasional lapses are indeed inevitable; for Al Ghazali was not merely breaking new ground in several fields, but thinking and building many centuries ahead of his age. Often he provides a key to his own ambiguities in the vivid analogies with which he illustrates his thought. That his parables from daily life such as when

water wells up when a well is dug, it follows that innate ideas will emerge when the child's mind is probed, have retained their freshness through eight and a half centuries is perhaps because they meant something more to Al Ghazali than mere illustrations of perplexing points; they were evidence to him of the pervading spiritual unity that he discerned under the apparent complexity of phenomena.

Al Ghazali's theory of how we attain knowledge appears at first sight eclectic, a medley of unrelated and sometimes conflicting elements; only in the light of his whole intellectual and spiritual development is it revealed as peculiarly his own - a logical corollary to his fruitless quest among contemporary schools of thought for a theory of knowledge that he could accept as true. In the course of his search he had conceived a deep mistrust of knowledge gained by acceptance of authority; hence the one element common to the four sources of knowledge that he conceived as true is that the ideas are received into the mind at first hand. This fourfold division of the sources of knowledge, of which an account was given in Part II is Al Ghazali's contribution to epistemology. The theory aims at being logical rather than mystical; but it is mainly the logic of his own native sanity; and when he ventures into a formal Aristotelian system, the results are not impressive.

The division is through and through original; for, when elements of other systems have been drawn upon, Al Ghazali has restricted and manipulated them into conformity with the rest of his theory. Thus his confining of innate knowledge to theological facts and axiomatic universals introduces a major limitation into the theory of innate ideas as held by Plato, and admits "reminiscence" into his educational theory only so far as relates to these kinds of knowledge. Then the delayed emergence (until puberty) of innate ideas gives full play to his doctrine that the larger part^{of} knowledge comes through the channels of sense perception and through the activity of the mind working upon itself. These two tenets - elaborated six centuries later by Locke as "Sensation" and "Reflection" undoubtedly place Al Ghazali well ahead of his age as a bold and progressive thinker. Unfortunately, in elaborating "Reflection" and "the reasoning process" he confuses the issue. He is here on the border-line between theories of knowledge and education, and, in his zeal to score a victory for the operations of reason over the acceptance of authority, he speaks of the syllogistic process as an instrument for the production of new knowledge. Now the syllogism deduces the consequences of premisses that are taken for granted, and the conclusion is implicit in these premisses. Al Ghazali prescribes, for the advancement of knowledge, a progressive

chain of syllogisms, each one containing elements from its immediate forerunner. One may possibly infer that what he has in mind in speaking of "reasoning" is something like the process of induction, though he purports to be speaking of syllogism in its simplest form. A more probable explanation is that Al Ghazali, in his concern to prescribe a mode of thought that takes nothing for granted, failed to recognise the limitation of the syllogism and used the word in a much more inclusive sense.

To complete his theory of knowledge Al Ghazali breaks his self-imposed ban on contemplative thought, and reveals a loftier vision than his Muslim teachers could rise to. The conception is a splendid one: a knowledge beyond the scope of sense perception and the reasoning faculty, accessible only to the fully purified heart (therefore acquired, not innate), and entering the heart through its inner door, from the divine realm. The analogy employed to make it "clear even to simple minds" is worthy of the conception: a pool which, if deepened, can reach a spring of water purer and more constant than the surface streams. The power and poetry of the whole exposition carry the reader with them. But not so Al Ghazali himself; and it is unfortunate that, detecting a flaw in the logic of his conception, he sought to rectify it by an appeal to the theory of "forms" or "ideas". No such rectification seems

called for; and Al Ghazali's argument is not happy, owing, perhaps, to his insufficient grasp of the theory of "forms".

In his epistemology Al Ghazali is essentially idealistic; the relation between mind and reality occupies the forefront of his theory; his belief in the antecedence of reality, and in the mind as a mirror to reflect its images, brings him into line with the scholastic theory of knowledge. But Al Ghazali's idealism is not an innovation. He is rather an example of the contemporary tendency of religious thought. Even the Quran embodies the element of this idealism as we see in the principle of the "Preserved Tablet", on which the original knowledge was written long before the creation of the Universe. The conception of the mind as a mirror of reality is clearly shown in Al Ghazali's use of the similes, in particular his conception of the "knowing Conditions" as comparable to the conditions under which the mirror reflects the images of visible objects shows well the clear relation between his employment of simile and his epistemological theory; indeed the wealth of pictorial images with which he enriched the scholarship of his day is equalled by none of his Muslim contemporaries. His division of knowledge or belief into (1) that based on authority (2) that based on logical grounds (3) that based on vision, is in line with Plato's conception of the categories of knowledge, which is discussed in the sixth

book of the "Republic".

Al Ghazali did not recognise as "knowledge" that which is based on acceptance of authority. The knowledge that is based on the thinkers own logical proofs is more reliable, but is not the true knowledge, which is based on "certainty". This is the knowledge achieved by the saints, and corresponds to the vision of the eye. It is only a step to the highest knowledge which is to be fully gained only in the world to come. Here the doctrine of the Vision of God occupies and directs the whole of his thinking. In this doctrine he is not original, but a true representative and an able exponent of Sufi thought. The way to the true knowledge that is attainable in this world is outlined in a mystical scheme, which does not in substance differ from the scheme of his Sufi teachers. But Al Ghazali's characteristic division of knowledge into "practical" and "contemplative" in the strict Sufi sense of the words stands as one of his peculiarities. A further distinction is between religious and secular knowledge - the supernatural knowledge which comes through the Revelation of the prophets and the natural knowledge which comes through the exercise of human reason; he considers these two as operating as an indivisible unit, such that its parts can only work if they work together. Here his analogy of food corresponding to rational knowledge and medicine to religious knowledge shows

clearly his attitude towards both orders of knowledge and
the relation
consequently/between religious and secular education.

In the field of moral education Al Ghazali stands out as pioneer and master, the first Muslim educationalist to investigate the building of character on a grand scale. He was, I believe, convinced that moral education could most effectually further the purposes of the practical part of his spiritual teaching. To him "practical" and moral education were distinct but it is no exaggeration to say that they virtually constitute one body of ethical teaching. The scientific part of his moral scheme is platonic and aristotelian; the rest is substantially of Sufi character. Regulation of passions and desires dominate both his Sufi and moral schemes and bring the two into close relationship. This accounts for the great importance he attached to the training of character.

Despite the severity of religious discipline to which he had himself been subject the austerity he prescribed in bringing up children was tempered by a great moderation and sanity. His moral and sufi scheme overshadowed his whole aim, which was to equip the young with right moral standards and instil qualities that would regulate their spiritual future. Hence training must start right from birth, when the nature is neither good nor bad, but destined to be made one or other by its environment. Hence Al Ghazali's fear of corruption from outside influences; hence,

too, the paramount importance, in his scheme, of parents, teachers, and the child's own little world.

The reader is struck by Al Ghazali's silence concerning elementary academic instruction. Since, however, this silence extends to reading and writing, it may be supposed that the first steps in general education are to be achieved during the period when he insists that the children should be learning the Quran by heart.

In the later period of childhood, the preparatory stage preceding manhood, religious instruction plays only a small part, and is to be directed exclusively towards moral aims.

Freedom in the sense of modern "experimentalism" finds no place in Al Ghazali's scheme since his child is conceived as clay in the hands of his parents and teachers. He is to have no choice but to be fashioned in the educational mould that Al Ghazali himself designs. Underlying all these restrictions to be imposed upon the child is the "fear" factor, which pervades the whole of his educational theory.

In the matter of adult education Al Ghazali keeps strictly to the line of Quranic precept in accordance with general orthodox practice. Concerning secular education, however, his systematisation of subjects necessary to the wellbeing of the community such as the principal arts and crafts is of interest as proving that his mystical leanings did not affect his

recognition of man's need of secular education. His notion of such education is, of course, remote from that of our own day; but is of special interest in its coming from a man of other-worldly outlook and pursuits. It constitutes the practical side of his theory that rational knowledge has a function similar to that of food in relation to the body.

Al Ghazali is, in my judgment, the outstanding educational figure, not merely of his own age, but of the whole history of Islam. Bearing the stamp of his powerful personality his system should be designated "ghazalian". It is built upon his firm belief in the testimony of his own experience; its merits rest partly on his intellectual gifts of observation, lucidity, and a happy balancing of theory and practice, partly and perhaps mainly, on his independence of mind and judgment. In defence of his principles he was a great fighter: he did battle with the theologian, the jurist, and the philosopher, in each of whose vocations he was himself pre-eminent; he was a devoted sufi, who looked jealously into the credentials of professing sufis; he was an orthodox Muslim, yet a fearless innovator; he condemned philosophy, yet it was part of his legacy to make it popular; his own philosophy embraced many elements of human thought and was the outcome of a thorough examination of current schools, yet its final message was startlingly original.

Nearly nine centuries divide Al Ghazali from the present generation; but once or twice in this study his mind has been shown working far ahead of his time. Let us see whether, and at

what points, it has made contact with the educational thought of our own. His language is not scientific; his theories are presented through the ancient medium of parable and personification. They have the freshness of pioneer work, the keenness that distinguishes a single mind's productions, but is blunted in controversy and the apparatus of administration. We must look below these surface differences. Al Ghazali's fear of authority as a guide to knowledge is exaggerated and leads him into error; but it contains the germ of the ^{scientific} modern method. His defining of keywords shows strange overlappings of usage; but its motive, the purging of scientific terminology, has led, in our time, to a science of meaning. He has thus planned some of the instruments of modern education, though his designs are archaic. Concerning the material to be fashioned, Al Ghazali's penetrating insight has given an extraordinarily true account of the human mind, its dangers and defences; but modern implements will probe further. So we come to the purpose of education - its near and distant objectives. As for the latter, there is divergence between the modern educationalist's outlook and Al Ghazali's: the sole purpose of the latter is to equip the soul for its journey to God; the primary aim of education today is to equip the individual for his walk in life. Yet it is exactly in the problem of how and what to teach that Al Ghazali's system comes into a certain identity with our own. His message to the present-day educationalist is to confirm that

the building of character must keep pace with intellectual growth, that the development of the moral outlook is an integral part of the training of the mind.

This is Al Ghazali as I have understood him; a man I venture to enrol him among the great men of educational inspiration in the history of human thought.

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